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THE LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS; WITH CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THEIR WORKS.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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DRYDEN.

DRYDEN.

OF the great poet whoſe life I am about to delineate, the curioſity which his reputation muſt excite, will require a diſplay more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they reverenced his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what caſual mention and uncertain tradition have ſupplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born Auguſt 9, 1631, at Aldwincle near Oundle, the ſon of Eraſmus Dryden of Tichmerſh; who was the third ſon of Sir Eraſmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Aſhby. All theſe places are in Northamptonſhire; but the original

ſtock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his laſt biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an eſtate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was ſaid, an Anabaptiſt. For either of theſe particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have ſecured him from that poverty which ſeems always to have oppreſſed him; or if he had waſted it, to have made him aſhamed of publiſhing his neceſſities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a ſcrutiny ſufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waſte of his patrimony, or conſidered as a deſerter from another religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick was miſinformed.

From Weſtminſter School, where he was inſtructed as one of the king's ſcholars by Dr. Buſby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Weſtminſter ſcholarſhips at Cambridge.

Of

Of his ſchool performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Haſtings, compoſed with great ambition of ſuch conceits as, notwithſtanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley ſtill kept in reputation. Lord Haſtings died of the ſmall-pox, and his poet has made of the puſtules firſt roſebuds, and then gems; at laſt exalts them into ſtars; and ſays,

> No comet need foretell his change drew on,
> Whoſe corps might ſeem a conſtellation.

At the univerſity he does not appear to have been eager of poetical diſtinction, or to have laviſhed his early wit either on fictitious ſubjects or publick occaſions. He probably conſidered that he who purpoſed to be an author, ought firſt to be a ſtudent. He obtained, whatever was the reaſon, no fellowſhip in the College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to gueſs: had he thought himſelf injured, he knew how to complain. In the Life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the College with gratitude; but in a prologue at Oxford, he has theſe lines:

Oxford to him a dearer name ſhall be
Than his own mother-univerſity;
Thebes did his rude unknowing youth engage;
He chooſes Athens in his riper age.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a publick candidate for fame, by publiſhing *Heroick Stanzas on the late Lord Protector*; which, compared with the verſes of Sprat and Waller on the ſame occaſion, were ſufficient to raiſe great expectations of the riſing poet.

When the king was reſtored, Dryden, like the other panegyriſts of uſurpation, changed his opinion, or his profeſſion, and publiſhed ASTREA REDUX, *a poem on the happy reſtoration and return of his moſt ſacred Majeſty King Charles the Second.*

The reproach of inconſtancy was, on this occaſion, ſhared with ſuch numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor diſgrace; if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raiſed him enemies.

The ſame year he praiſed the new king in a ſecond poem on his reſtoration. In the ASTRÆA was the line,

An

An horrid *ſtillneſs* firſt *invades* the *ear*,
And in that ſilence we a tempeſt fear.

for which he was perſecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deſerved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, ſo conſidered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewiſe certainly is *darkneſs*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refuſed the right of aſcribing effects or agency to them as to poſitive powers. No man ſcruples to ſay that *darkneſs* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is alſo privation, yet who has made any difficulty of aſſigning to Death a dart and the power of ſtriking?

In ſettling the order of his works, there is ſome difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publiſhing is not always the ſame; nor can the firſt editions be eaſily found, if even from them could be obtained the neceſſary information.

The time at which his firſt play was exhibited is not certainly known, becauſe it was not

printed till it was ſome years afterwards altered and revived; but if the plays are printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of ſome, thoſe of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-ſecond year of his life, he commenced a writer for the ſtage; compelled undoubtedly by neceſſity, for he appears never to have loved that exerciſe of his genius, or to have much pleaſed himſelf with his own dramas.

Of the ſtage, when he had once invaded it, he kept poſſeſſion for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who ſometimes prevailed, or the cenſure of criticks, which was often poignant and often juſt; but with ſuch a degree of reputation as made him at leaſt ſecure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the publick.

His firſt piece was a comedy called the *Wild Gallant*. He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was ſo much diſapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect ſtate to the form in which it now appears, and which

is

is yet ſufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wiſh that there were no neceſſity of following the progreſs of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole ſeries of his dramatick performances; and indeed there is the leſs, as they do not appear in the collection to which this narration is annexed. It will be fit however to enumerate them, and to take eſpecial notice of thoſe that are diſtinguiſhed by any peculiarity intrinſick or concomitant; for the compoſition and fate of eight and twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he publiſhed the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a ſtateſman. In this play he made his eſſay of dramatick rhyme, which he defends in his dedication, with ſufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himſelf a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme. The

The parts which either of them wrote are not diſtinguiſhed.

The *Indian Emperor* was publiſhed in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a ſequel to *Howard's Indian Queen*. Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, diſtributed at the door; an expedient ſuppoſed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearſal*, when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed, to inſtil into the audience ſome conception of his plot.

In this play is the deſcription of Night, which *Rymer* has made famous by preferring it to thoſe of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced ſoon after the Reſtoration, as it ſeems, by the earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taſte by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote, only to pleaſe, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of verſification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his maſter's prefer-

ence. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifeſt propriety, he ſeems to have grown aſhamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatick rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, in which Sir Robert Howard had cenſured it.

In 1667, he publiſhed *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*, which ſeems to be one of his moſt elaborate works.

It is addreſſed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interſperſed many critical obſervations, of which ſome are common, and ſome perhaps ventured without much conſideration. He began, even now, to exerciſe the domination of conſcious genius, by recommending his own performance: "I am ſatisfied that as the "Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] "are incompaſably the beſt ſubjects I ever "had, ſo what I have written on them is "much better than what I have performed

"on

" on any other. As I have endeavoured to " adorn my poem with noble thought, ſo " much more to expreſs thoſe thoughts with " elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroick ſtanzas of four lines; a meaſure which he had learned from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which he then thought the moſt majeſtick that the Engliſh language affords. Of this ſtanza he mentions the encumbrances, encreaſed as they were by the exactneſs which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his cuſtom to recommend his works, by repreſentation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have ſufficiently conſidered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praiſe.

There ſeems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, ſomething that is not now eaſily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the earl of Orrery, had defended dramatick rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had cenſured his opinion.

nion. Dryden vindicated himſelf in his *Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry*; Howard, in his Preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a Preface to the *Indian Emperor*, replied to the Animadverſions with great aſperity, and almoſt with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Annus Mirabilis* was publiſhed. Here appears a ſtrange inconſiſtency; but Langbaine affords ſome help, by relating that the anſwer to Howard was not publiſhed in the firſt edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the *Duke of Lerma* did not appear till 1668, the ſame year in which the Dialogue was publiſhed, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now ſo much diſtinguiſhed, that in 1668 he ſucceeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The ſalary of the laureat had been raiſed in favour of Jonſon, by Charles the Firſt, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce

of wine; a revenue in thoſe days not inadequate to the conveniencies of life.

The ſame year he publiſhed his Eſſay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and inſtructive dialogue; in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to repreſent the duke of Dorſet. This work ſeems to have given Addiſon a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen, is a tragi-comedy. In the preface he diſcuſſes a curious queſtion, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions: and determines very juſtly, that, of the plan and diſpoſition, and all that can be reduced to principles of ſcience, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in thoſe parts where fancy predominates, ſelf-love may eaſily deceive. He might have obſerved, that what is good only becauſe it pleaſes, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to pleaſe.

Sir Martin Marall is a comedy, publiſhed without preface or dedication, and at firſt without

without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like moſt of the reſt, with plagiariſm; and obſerves that the ſong is tranſlated from Voiture, allowing however that both the ſenſe and meaſure are exactly obſerved.

The Tempeſt is an alteration of Shakſpeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, "whom," ſays he, "I found of "ſo quick a fancy, that nothing was pro- "poſed to him in which he could not "ſuddenly produce a thought extremely "pleaſant and ſurpriſing; and thoſe firſt "thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin "proverb, were not always the leaſt happy; "and as his fancy was quick, ſo likewiſe "were the products of it remote and new. "He borrowed not of any other, and his "imaginations were ſuch as could not eaſily "enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of theſe two powerful minds was, that to Shakſpeare's monſter Caliban is added a ſiſter-monſter Sicorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never ſeen a man,

is

is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never ſeen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden ſeems to have had his quiet much diſturbed by the ſucceſs of the *Empreſs of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*; which was ſo much applauded, as to make him think his ſupremacy of reputation in ſome danger. Settle had not only been proſperous on the ſtage, but, in the confidence of ſucceſs, had publiſhed his play, with ſculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the laſt blaſt of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repreſs theſe emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealouſy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication ſuch criticiſm as malignant impatience could pour out in haſte.

Of Settle he gives this character. "He's "an animal of a moſt deplored underſtand-"ing, without converſation. His being is "in a twilight of ſenſe, and ſome glimmer-

"ing

"ing of thought, which he can never faſhion "into wit or Engliſh. His ſtyle is boiſter- "ous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incor- "rigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually "harſh and ill-ſounding. The little talent "which he has, is fancy. He ſometimes "labours with a thought; but, with the "pudder he makes to bring it into the "world, 'tis commonly ſtill-born; ſo that, "for want of learning and elocution, he will "never be able to expreſs any thing either "naturally or juſtly!"

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticiſm prevails moſt over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He "has a heavy hand at fools, and a great "felicity in writing nonſenſe for them. "Fools they will be in ſpite of him. His "King, his two Empreſſes, his villain, and "his ſub-villain, nay his hero, have all a "certain natural caſt of the father—their fol- "ly was born and bred in them, and ſome- "thing of the Elkanah will be viſible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a parti- cular remark. Having gone through the

firſt act, he ſays, " To conclude this act with
" the moſt rumbling piece of nonſenſe
" ſpoken yet,

" To flattering lightning our feign'd ſmiles
" conform,
" Which back'd with thunder do but gild a
" ſtorm.

" *Conform a ſmile to lightning*, make a *ſmile*
" imitate *lightning*, and *flattering lightning*:
" lightning ſure is a threatening thing.
" And this lightning muſt *gild a ſtorm*. Now
" if I muſt conform my ſmiles to lightning,
" then my ſmiles muſt gild a ſtorm too:
" to *gild* with *ſmiles* is a new invention of
" gilding. And gild a ſtorm by being
" *backed with thunder*. Thunder is part of
" the ſtorm; ſo one part of the ſtorm muſt
" help to *gild* another part, and help by
" *backing*; as if a man would gild a thing
" the better for being backed, or having a
" load upon his back. So that here is
" *gilding* by *conforming*, *ſmiling*, *lightning*,
" *backing*, and *thundering*. The whole is as
" if I ſhould ſay thus, I will make my
" counterfeit ſmiles look like a flattering
" ſtone-horſe, which, being backed with a
" trooper, does but gild the battle. I am
" miſtaken if nonſenſe is not here pretty
" thick

"thick ſown. Sure the poet writ theſe two "lines aboard ſome ſmack in a ſtorm, and, "being ſea-ſick, ſpewed up a good lump "of clotted nonſenſe at once."

Here is perhaps a ſufficient ſpecimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not eaſily to be found, it may gratify curioſity to quote it more largely.

Whene'er ſhe bleeds,
He no ſeverer a damnation needs,
That dares pronounce the ſentence of her death,
Than the infection that attends that breath.

"*That attends that breath.*—The poet is at "*breath* again; *breath* can never 'ſcape him; "and here he brings in a *breath* that muſt "be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a ſentence; "and this ſentence is not to be pronounced "till the condemned party *bleeds*; that is, "ſhe muſt be executed firſt, and ſentenced "after; and the *pronouncing* of this *ſentence* "will be infectious; that is, others will "catch the diſeaſe of that ſentence, and "this infecting of others will torment a "man's ſelf. The whole is thus; *when* "*ſhe bleeds, thou needeſt no greater hell or*

" *torment to thyſelf, than infecting of others*
" *by pronouncing a ſentence upon her.* What
" hodge-podge does he make here! Never
" was Dutch grout ſuch clogging, thick,
" indigeſtible ſtuff. But this is but a taſte
" to ſtay the ſtomach; we ſhall have a more
" plentiful meſs preſently.

" Now to diſh up the poet's broth, that
" I promiſed:

For when we're dead, and our freed ſouls enlarg'd,
Of nature's groſſer burden we're diſcharg'd,
Then gently, as a happy lover's ſigh,
Like wandering meteors through the air we'll fly,
And in our airy walk, as ſubtle gueſts,
We'll ſteal into our cruel fathers breaſts,
There read their ſouls, and track each paſſion's ſphere:
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here,
And in their orbs view the dark characters
Of ſieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.
We'll blot out all thoſe hideous draughts, and write
Pure and white forms; then with a radiant light
Their breaſts encircle, till their paſſions be
Gentle as nature in its infancy:

Till

Till ſoften'd by our charms their furies ceaſe,
And their revenge reſolves into a peace.
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
Whom living we made foes, dead we'll make friends.

"If this be not a very liberal meſs, I will "refer myſelf to the ſtomach of any mo- "derate gueſt. And a rare meſs it is, far "excelling any Weſtminſter white-broth. "It is a kind of gibblet porridge, made "of the gibblets of a couple of young geeſe, "ſtodged full of *meteors, orbs, ſpheres, track, "hideous draughts, dark characters, white "forms*, and *radiant lights*, deſigned not only "to pleaſe appetite, and indulge luxury; "but it is alſo phyſical, being an approved "medicine to purge choler: for it is pro- "pounded by Morena, as a receipt to cure "their fathers of their choleric humours: "and were it written in characters as bar- "barous as the words, might very well paſs "for a doctor's bill. To conclude, it is "porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a pig with a "pudding in the belly, 'tis I know not "what: for, certainly, never any one that "pretended to write ſenſe, had the impu- "dence before to put ſuch ſtuff as this,

" into the mouths of thoſe that were to
" ſpeak it before an audience, whom he did
" not take to be all fools; and after that
" to print it too, and expoſe it to the exa-
" mination of the world. But let us ſee,
" what we can make of this ſtuff:

For when we're dead, and our freed ſouls enlarg'd—

" Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it
" is to have *our freed ſouls ſet free*. Now if
" to have a ſoul ſet free is to be dead, then
" to have a *freed ſoul* ſet free, is to have a
" dead man die.

Then gentle, as a happy lover's ſigh—

" They two like one *ſigh*, and that one *ſigh*
" like two wandering meteors,

—ſhall flie through the air—

" That is, they ſhall mount above like fall-
" ing ſtars, or elſe they ſhall ſkip like two
" Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with a
" wiſp, and Madge with a candle."

And in their airy walk ſteel into their cruel fathers breaſts, like ſubtle gueſts. So " that " their *fathers breaſts* muſt be in an *airy* " *walk*,

" *walk*, an airy *walk* of a *flier*. *And there* " *they will read their ſouls, and track the* " *ſpheres of their paſſions.* That is, theſe " walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c. " will put on his ſpectacles, and fall a *reading* " *ſouls*, and put on his pumps and fall a " *tracking of ſpheres*; ſo that he will read " and run, walk and fly at the ſame time! " Oh! Nimble Jack. *Then he will ſee, how* " *revenge here, how ambition there*—The " birds will hop about. *And then view the* " *dark characters of ſieges, ruins, murders,* " *blood, and wars, in their orbs:* " *Track the* " *characters* to their forms! Oh! rare ſport " for Jack. Never was place ſo full of " game as theſe breaſts! You cannot ſtir but " fluſh a ſphere, ſtart a character, or un- " kennel an orb!"

Settle's is ſaid to have been the firſt play embelliſhed with ſculptures; thoſe ornaments ſeem to have given poor Dryden great diſturbance. He tries however to eaſe his pain, by venting his malice in a parody.

" The poet has not only been ſo impudent " to expoſe all this ſtuff, but ſo arrogant to

" defend it with an epiſtle; like a ſaucy " booth-keeper, that, when he had put a " cheat upon the people, would wrangle and " fight with any that would not like it, or " would offer to diſcover it; for which ar- " rogance our poet receives this correction; " and to jerk him a little the ſharper, I will " not tranſpoſe his verſe, but by the help " of his own words tranſ-non-ſenſe ſenſe, " that, by my ſtuff, people may judge the " better what his is;

" Great Boy, thy tragedy and ſculptures done
" From preſs, and plates in fleets do homeward
" come:
" And in ridiculous and humble pride,
" Their courſe in ballad-ſingers baſkets guide,
" Whoſe greaſy twigs do all new beauties take,
" From the gay ſhews thy dainty ſculptures
" make.
" Thy lines a meſs of rhiming nonſenſe yield,
" A ſenſeleſs tale, with flattering fuſtian fill'd.
" No grain of ſenſe does in one line appear,
" Thy words big bulks of boiſterous bombaſt
" bear.
" With noiſe they move, and from players
" mouths rebound,
" When their tongues dance to thy words emp-
" ty ſound.

" By

" By thee inſpir'd the rumbling verſes roll,
" As if that rhyme and bombaſt lent a ſoul:
" And with that ſoul they ſeem taught duty too,
" To huffing words does humble nonſenſe bow,
" As if it would thy worthleſs worth enhance,
" To th' loweſt rank of fops thy praiſe advance;
" To whom, by inſtinct, all thy ſtuff is dear;
" Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
" From breaths of fools thy commendation
" ſpreads,
" Fame ſings thy praiſe with mouths of logger-
" heads.
" With noiſe and laughing each thy fuſtian
" greets,
" 'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,
" Who have their tribute ſent, and homage
" given,
" As men in whiſpers ſend loud noiſe to heaven.

" Thus I have daubed him with his own " puddle: and now we are come from a- " board his dancing, maſking, rebounding, " breathing fleet; and as if we had land- " ed at Gotham, we meet nothing but " fools and nonſenſe."

Such was the criticiſm to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage with little provocation,

and

and terrour with little danger. To ſee the higheſt minds thus levelled with the meaneſt, may produce ſome ſolace to the conſciouſneſs of weakneſs, and ſome mortification to the pride of wiſdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are firſt levelled in their deſires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happineſs in the claps of multitudes.

The *Mock Aſtrologer*, a comedy, is dedicated to the illuſtrious duke of Newcaſtle, whom he courts by adding to his praiſes thoſe of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his ſtudies. It is unpleaſing to think how many names, once celebrated, are ſince forgotten. Of Newcaſtle's works nothing is now known but his treatiſe on horſemanſhip.

The Preface ſeems very elaborately written, and contains many juſt remarks on the Fathers of the Engliſh drama. Shakſpeare's plots, he ſays, are in the hundred novels of *Cinthio*; thoſe of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spaniſh Stories; Jonſon only made them for himſelf. His criticiſms upon tragedy,

comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of ſome of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to ſay, that he was not the firſt nor perhaps the greateſt offender. Againſt thoſe that accuſed him of plagiariſm, he alleges a favourable expreſſion of the king: "He only deſired "that they, who accuſe me of thefts, would "ſteal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he ſpends in fitting for the Engliſh ſtage what he borrows from others.

Tyrannick Love, or the Virgin Martyr, was another tragedy in rhyme, conſpicuous for many paſſages of ſtrength and elegance, and many of empty noiſe and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the ſport of criticiſm; and were at length, if his own confeſſion may be truſted, the ſhame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in ſeven weeks. Want of time was often his

his excuſe, or perhaps ſhortneſs of time was his private boaſt in the form of an apology.

It was written before the *Conqueſt of Granada*, but publiſhed after it. The deſign is to recommend piety. "I conſidered that "pleaſure was not the only end of poeſy, "and that even the inſtructions of morality "were not ſo wholly the buſineſs of a poet, "as that precepts and examples of piety "were to be omitted; for to leave that em-"ployment altogether to the clergy, were to "forget that religion was firſt taught in "verſe, which the lazineſs or dulneſs of ſuc-"ceeding prieſthood turned afterwards into "proſe." Thus fooliſhly could Dryden write, rather than not ſhew his malice to the parſons.

The two parts of the *Conqueſt of Granada* are written with a ſeeming determination to glut the publick with dramatick wonders; to exhibit in its higheſt elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impoſſible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of poſterity. All the

rays

rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all reſtraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cauſe, and loves in ſpite of the obligations of juſtice, of rejection by his miſtreſs, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the ſcenes are, for the moſt part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illuſtrious depravity, and majeſtick madneſs: ſuch as, if it is ſometimes deſpiſed, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the aſtoniſhing.

In the Epilogue to the ſecond part of the *Conqueſt of Granada*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleaſure of diſcrediting his predeceſſors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long poſtſcript. He had promiſed a ſecond dialogue, in which he ſhould more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the Engliſh poets, who have written in the dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promiſe was never formally performed; but, with reſpect to the dramatick writers, he has

has given us in his prefaces, and in this poſtſcript, ſomething equivalent; but his purpoſe being to exalt himſelf by the compariſon, he ſhews faults diſtinctly, and only praiſes excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in profeſſed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itſelf the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*; to whom *Sprat* addreſſed the Life of Cowley, with ſuch veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of inſtruction from his remarks. But let honeſt credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*, were at laſt obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to ſatisfy all reaſonable deſire.

In the firſt Letter his obſervation is only general: "You do live," ſays he, "in as "much ignorance and darkneſs as you did "in the womb: your writings are like a "Jack-of-all-trades ſhop; they have a vari-"ety, but nothing of value; and if thou "art

" art not the dulleſt plant-animal that ever
" the earth produced, all that I have
" converſed with are ſtrangely miſtaken in
" thee."

In the ſecond, he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Piſtol. " But I am," ſays he, " ſtrangely miſtaken if I have not " ſeen this very *Almanzor* of yours in ſome " diſguiſe about this town, and paſſing un- " der another name. Pr'ythee tell me true, " was not this Huffcap once the *Indian* " *Emperor*, and at another time did he not " call himſelf *Maximin?* Was not *Lynda-* " *raxa* once called *Almeira?* I mean under " *Montezuma* the Indian Emperor? I pro- " teſt and vow they are either the ſame, or " ſo alike that I cannot, for my heart, diſ- " tinguiſh one from the other. You are " therefore a ſtrange unconſcionable thief; " thou art not content to ſteal from others, " but doſt rob thy poor wretched ſelf too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes repriſals

repriſals upon his enemy. To ſay that his anſwer is equal to the cenſure, is no high commendation. To expoſe Dryden's method of analyſing his expreſſions, he tries the ſame experiment upon the deſcription of the ſhips in the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to ſhew, that by ſtudied miſconſtruction every thing may be equally repreſented as ridiculous. After ſo much of Dryden's elegant animadverſions, juſtice requires that ſomething of Settle's ſhould be exhibited. The following obſervations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

" Fate after him below with pain did move,
" And victory could ſcarce keep pace above.

" Theſe two lines, if he can ſhew me any " ſenſe or thought in, or any thing but " bombaſt and noiſe, he ſhall make me be- " lieve every word in his obſervations on " *Morocco* ſenſe.

" In the *Empreſs of Morocco* were theſe " lines:

" I'll

" I'll travel then to ſome remoter ſphere,
" Till I find out new worlds, and crown you
" there.

" On which Dryden made this remark:

" *I believe our learned author takes a ſphere*
" *for a country: the ſphere of Morocco, as if*
" *Morocco were the globe of earth and water;*
" *but a globe is no ſphere neither, by his leave,*"
" &c. So *ſphere* muſt not be ſenſe, unleſs
" it relate to a circular motion about a globe,
" in which ſenſe the aſtronomers uſe it. I
" would deſire him to expound thoſe lines
" in *Granada*:

" I'll to the turrets of the palace go,
" And add new fire to thoſe that fight below.
" Thence, hero-like, with torches by my ſide,
" (Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.
" No, like his better fortune I'll appear,
" With open arms, looſe vail and flowing hair,
" Juſt flying forward from my rowling ſphere.

" I wonder, if he be ſo ſtrict, how he dares
" make ſo bold with *ſphere* himſelf, and be
" ſo critical in other men's writings. For-
" tune is fancied ſtanding on a globe, not on
" a *ſphere*, as he told us, in the firſt Act.

" Becauſe *Elkanah's Similies are the moſt* " *unlike things to what they are compared in* " *the world,* I'll venture to ſtart a ſimile in " his *Annus Mirabilis:* he gives this poeti- " cal deſcription of the ſhip called the " *London:*

" The goodly London in her gallant trim,
" The Phenix-daughter of the vanquiſht old,
" Like a rich bride does to the ocean ſwim,
" And on her ſhadow rides in floating gold.
" Her flag aloft ſpread ruffling in the wind,
" And ſanguine ſtreamers ſeem'd the flood to
" fire:
" The weaver, charm'd with what his loom de-
" ſign'd,
" Goes on to ſea, and knows not to retire.
" With roomy decks, her guns of mighty
" ſtrength,
" Whoſe low-laid mouths each mounting bil-
" low laves,
" Deep in her draught, and w like in her
" length,
" She ſeems a ſea-waſp flying on the waves.

" What a wonderful pother is here, to make " all theſe poetical beautifications of a ſhip! " that is, a *phenix* in the firſt ſtanza, and but " a *waſp* in the laſt: nay, to make his hum- " ble compariſon of a *waſp* more ridiculous,

" he

" he does not ſay it flies upon the waves as " nimbly as a waſp, or the like, but it ſeem- " ed a *waſp*. But our author at the writing " of this was not in his altitudes, to compare " ſhips to floating palaces; a compariſon to " the purpoſe, was a perfection he did not " arrive to, till his *Indian Emperor's* days. " But perhaps his ſimilitude has more in it " than we imagine; this ſhip had a great " many guns in her, and they, put all to- " gether, made the ſting in the waſp's tail: " for this is all the reaſon I can gueſs, why " it ſeem'd a *waſp*. But, becauſe we will " allow him all we can to help out, let it " be a *phenix ſea-waſp*, and the rarity of ſuch " an animal may do much towards the heigh- " tening the fancy.

" It had been much more to his pur- " poſe, if he had deſigned to render the " ſenſeleſs play little, to have ſearched for " ſome ſuch pedantry as this:

" Two ifs ſcarce make one poſſibility.
" If juſtice will take all and nothing give,
" Juſtice, methinks, is not diſtributive.
" To die or kill you, is the alternative,
" Rather than take your life, I will not live.

" Obſerve, how prettily our author chops " logick in heroick verſe. Three ſuch fuſtian " canting words as *diſtributive*, *alternative*, " and *two ifs*, no man but himſelf would " have come within the noiſe of. But he's " a man of general learning, and all comes " into his play.

" 'Twould have done well too, if he " could have met with a rant or two, worth " the obſervation: ſuch as,

" Move ſwiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
" Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy
" race.

" But ſurely the Sun, whether he flies a " lover's or not a lover's pace, leaves weeks " and months, nay years too, behind him in " his race.

" Poor Robin, or any other of the Philo- " mathematicks, would have given him ſa- " tisfaction in the point.

" If I could kill thee now, thy fate's ſo low,
" That I muſt ſtoop, ere I can give the blow.
" But mine is fixt ſo far above thy crown,
" That all thy men,
" Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

" Now

" Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is " fixt, I cannot gueſs; but wherever it " is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all " Abdalla's ſubjects, piled upon one another, " might not pull down his fate ſo well as " without piling: beſides, I think Abdal- " lah ſo wiſe a man, that if Almanzor had " told him piling his men upon his back " might do the feat, he would ſcarce bear " ſuch a weight, for the pleaſure of the ex- " ploit: but it is a huff, and let Abdalla " do it if he dare.

" The people like a headlong torrent go,
" And every dam they break or overflow.
" But, unoppos'd, they either loſe their force,
" Or wind in volumes to their former courſe.

" A very pretty alluſion, contrary to all ſenſe " or reaſon. Torrents, I take it, let them " wind never ſo much, can never return to " their former courſe, unleſs he can ſup- " poſe that fountains can go upwards, which " is impoſſible: nay more, in the fore- " going page he tells us ſo too. A trick of " a very unfaithful memory,

" But can no more than fountains upward flow.

" Which of a *torrent*, which ſignifies a rapid " ſtream, is much more impoſſible. Be- " ſides, if he goes to quibble, and ſay that " it is poſſible by art water may be made " return, and the ſame water run twice in " one and the ſame channel; then he quite " confutes what he ſays; for, it is by being " oppoſed, that it runs into its former " courſe: for all engines that make water " ſo return, do it by compulſion and oppo- " ſition. Or, if he means a headlong tor- " rent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, " yet they do not wind in volumes, but come " fore-right back (if their upright lies ſtraight " to their former courſe), and that by op- " poſition of the ſea-water, that drives them " back again.

" And for fancy, when he lights of any " thing like it, 'tis a wonder if it be not " borrowed. As here, for example of, I find " this fanciful thought in his *Ann. Mirab.*

" Old father Thames raiſed up his reverend head;
" But fear'd the fate of Simoeis would [illegible];
" Deep in his ooze he ſought his ſedgy bed;
" And ſhrunk his waters back into his urn.

" This is ſtolen from Cowley's *Davideis*, p. 9:

" Swift

" Swift Jordan ſtarted, and ſtrait backward fled,
" Hiding amongſt thick reeds his aged head.
" And when the Spaniards their aſſault begin,
" At once beat thoſe without and thoſe within.

" This Almanzor ſpeaks of himſelf; and ſure " for one man to conquer an army within the " city, and another without the city, at once, " is ſomething difficult; but this flight is " pardonable, to ſome we meet with in *Granada*. Oſmin, ſpeaking of Almanzor:

" Who, like a tempeſt that outrides the wind,
" Made a juſt battle, ere the bodies join'd.

" Pray what does this honourable perſon " mean by a *tempeſt that outrides the wind!* " A tempeſt that outrides itſelf. To ſuppoſe " a tempeſt without wind, is as bad as ſup- " poſing a man to walk without feet: for " if he ſuppoſes the tempeſt to be ſomething " diſtinct from the wind, yet as being the ef- " fect of wind only, to come before the cauſe " is a little prepoſterous: ſo that, if he takes " it one way, or if he takes it the other, " both theſe two *ifs* will ſcarce make one *poſſibi-* " *lity*." Enough of Settle.

Marriage Alamode is a comedy, dedicated to the Earl of Rocheſter; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry,

but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The earl of Rocheſter therefore was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always repreſents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with ſome diſreſpect in the preface to Juvenal.

The Aſſignation, or Love in a Nunnery, a comedy, was driven off the ſtage, *againſt the opinion*, as the author ſays, *of the beſt judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant addreſs, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his uſual complaint of hard treatment and unreaſonable cenſure.

Amboyna is a tiſſue of mingled dialogue in verſe and proſe, and was perhaps written in leſs time than the *Virgin Martyr*; though the author thought not fit either oſtentatiouſly or mournfully to tell how little labour it coſt him, or at how ſhort a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation againſt their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not leſs deſtructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the

the Spartans. This play was written in the ſecond Dutch war in 1673.

Troilus and Creſſida, is a play altered from Shakſpeare; but ſo altered that even in Langbaine's opinion, *the laſt ſcene in the third act is a maſterpiece*. It is introduced by a diſcourſe on *the grounds of criticiſm in tragedy*; to which I ſuſpect that Rymer's book had given occaſion.

The *Spaniſh Fryar* is a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written againſt the Papiſts, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at firſt, and partly by the real power both of the ſerious and riſible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at leaſt for ſome time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick ſcenes, and that it is neceſſary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the preſſure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilſome paſſions.

paſſions. Whoever ſays he cannot perform both parts, *is but half a writer for the ſtage.*

The *Duke of Guiſe*, a tragedy witten in conjunction with Lee, as *Oedipus* had been before, ſeems to deſerve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were anſwered by him; though at laſt he ſeems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and *he happened*, ſays Dryden, *to claim the promiſe juſt upon the finiſhing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little reſpite.*—Two *thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the firſt ſcene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the firſt half or ſomewhat more of the fifth.*

This was a play written profeſſedly for the party of the duke of York, whoſe ſucceſſion was then oppoſed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controverſy.

Albion

Albion and *Albania* is a muſical drama or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guiſe*, againſt the Republicans. With what ſucceſs it was performed, I have not found.

The State of Innocence and Fall of Man is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the perſonages are ſuch as cannot decently be exhibited on the ſtage. Some ſuch production was foreſeen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

Or if a work ſo infinite be ſpann'd,
Jealous I was leaſt ſome leſs ſkilful hand,
Such as diſquiet always what is well,
And by ill-imitating would excel,
Might hence preſume the whole creation's day,
To change in ſcenes, and ſhow it in a play.

It is another of his haſty productions; for the heat of his imagination raiſed it in a month.

This compoſition is addreſſed to the princeſs of Modena, then dutcheſs of York, in a ſtrain of flattery which diſgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words, could

uſe

uſe without ſelf-deteſtation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praiſing human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroick verſe, and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the uſe of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reaſon which he gives for printing what was never acted, cannot be overpaſſed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, "many hundred copies of it being diſperſed "abroad without my knowledge or conſent, "and every one gathering new faults, it be"came at length a libel againſt me." Theſe copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuſcript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be tranſcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not ſeek an apology in falſehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

the firſt hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his deſign in terms ſo obſcure, that he ſeems afraid leſt his plan ſhould be purloined, as, he ſays, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The "deſign," ſays he, "you know is great, the "ſtory Engliſh, and neither too near the "preſent times, nor too diſtant from them."

All for Love, or the World well loſt, a tragedy founded upon the ſtory of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, *is the only play which he wrote for himſelf*; the reſt were given to the people. It is by univerſal conſent accounted the work in which he has admitted the feweſt improprieties of ſtyle or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have cenſured as vitious, and the bad deſpiſed as fooliſh.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topicks

topicks of malicious and ignorant criticiſm, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deſervedly celebrated for their elegance and ſpritelineſs.

Limberham, or the kind Keeper, is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the ſtage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author ſays, altered or omitted. Dryden confeſſes that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet ſeldom favours him, imputes its expulſion to reſentment, becauſe it *ſo much expoſed the keeping part of the town.*

Oedipus is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the ſcenes, and compoſed the firſt and third acts.

Don Sebaſtian is commonly eſteemed either the firſt or ſecond of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many inci-

dents; and though it is not without ſallies of frantick dignity, and more noiſe than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the poſſibilities of real life, and has ſome ſentiments which leave a ſtrong impreſſion, it continued long to attract attention. Amidſt the diſtreſſes of princes, and the viciſſitudes of empire, are inſerted ſeveral ſcenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I ſuppoſe, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, paſſages of excellence univerſally acknowledged; the diſpute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebaſtian has always been admired.

This play was firſt acted in 1690, after Dryden had for ſome years diſcontinued dramatick poetry.

Amphitryon is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play ſeems to have ſucceeded at its firſt appearance; and was, I think, long conſidered as a very diverting entertainment.

Cleomenes

Cleomenes is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occaſioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and alluſively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the repreſentation, he was accoſted thus by ſome airy ſtripling: *Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have ſpent my time like your Spartan. That, Sir,* ſaid Dryden, *perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.*

King Arthur is another opera. It was the laſt work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to ſee it exhibited; and it does not ſeem to have been ever brought upon the ſtage. In the dedication to the marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleaſing account of his latter life.

His laſt drama was *Love triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the earl of Saliſbury he mentions *the lowneſs of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himſelf, and of which he has no reaſon to be aſhamed.*

This play appeared in 1694. It is ſaid to have been unſucceſsful. The cataſtrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confeſſed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatick labours with ill ſucceſs.

From ſuch a number of theatrical pieces it will be ſuppoſed, by moſt readers, that he muſt have improved his fortune; at leaſt, that ſuch diligence with ſuch abilities muſt have ſet penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that univerſal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouſe was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by thoſe who deſired the character of ſerioufneſs or decency. A grave lawyer would have debaſed his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in thoſe manſions of diſſolute licentiouſneſs. The profits of the theatre, when ſo many claſſes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had for a long time but a ſingle night. The firſt that had two nights was *Southern*, and the

firſt

firſt that had three was *Rowe*. There were however, in thoſe days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practiſe; and a play therefore ſeldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almoſt every piece had a dedication, written with ſuch elegance and luxuriance of praiſe, as neither haughtineſs nor avarice could be imagined able to reſiſt. But he ſeems to have made flattery too cheap. That praiſe is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increaſe the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticiſm; a kind of learning then almoſt new in the Engliſh language, and which he, who had conſidered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to diſtribute copiouſly without much labour. By theſe diſſertations the publick judgment muſt have been much improved; and Swift, who converſed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the ſucceſs of his own inſtructions, and found

his readers made ſuddenly too ſkilful to be eaſily ſatisfied.

His prologues had ſuch reputation, that for ſome time a play was conſidered as leſs likely to be well received, if ſome of his verſes did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being aſked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three; *Not*, ſaid he, *young man, out of diſreſpect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.*

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is ſaid to have engaged, by contract, to furniſh four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he publiſhed *All for Love*, *Aſſignation*, two parts of the *Conqueſt of Granada*, *Sir Martin Marall*, and the *State of Innocence*, ſix complete plays; with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiariſm ſhould be allowed, ſhews ſuch facility of compoſition, ſuch readineſs of language,

guage, and ſuch copiouſneſs of ſentiment, as, ſince the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has poſſeſſed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however ſmall, without moleſtation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppoſe. The two moſt diſtinguiſhed wits of the nobility, the duke of Buckingham and earl of Rocheſter, declared themſelves his enemies.

Buckingham characteriſed him in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rehearſal*; a farce which he is ſaid to have written with the aſſiſtance of Butler the author of *Hudibras*, Martin Clifford of the Charterhouſe, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance; in which, though by ſome artifice of action it yet keeps poſſeſſion of the ſtage, it is not poſſible now to find any thing that might not have been written without ſo long delay, or a confederacy ſo numerous.

To adjuſt the minute events of literary hiſtory, is tedious and troubleſome; it requires indeed no great force of underſtanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The *Rehearſal* was played in 1671, and yet is repreſented as ridiculing paſſages in the *Conqueſt of Granada* and *Aſſignation*, which were not publiſhed till 1678, in *Marriage Alamode* publiſhed in 1673, and in *Tyrannick Love* of 1677. Theſe contradictions ſhew how raſhly ſatire is applied.

It is ſaid that this farce was originally intended againſt Davenant, who in the firſt draught was characteriſed by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a ſoldier and an adventurer.

There is one paſſage in the *Rehearſal* ſtill remaining, which ſeems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his noſe, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruiſe; how this affected Dryden, does not

not appear. Davenant's noſe had ſuffered ſuch diminution by miſhaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is ſaid likewiſe that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The deſign was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the perſonal ſatire, to which it might owe its firſt reception, is now loſt or obſcured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dreſs, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden; the cant words which are ſo often in his mouth may be ſuppoſed to have been Dryden's habitual phraſes, or cuſtomary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged: this, as Lamotte relates himſelf to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other ſtrokes in the *Rehearſal* by which malice was gratified: the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volſcius* in a ſingle boot, is ſaid to have alluded to the miſconduct of the duke of Ormond, who loſt Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a miſtreſs.

The earl of Rocheſter, to ſuppreſs the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to perſuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time miſplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation: his *Empreſs of Morocco*, having firſt delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the higheſt; the next moment began its fall. Rocheſter withdrew his patronage; ſeeming reſolved, ſays one of his biographers, *to have a judgement contrary to that of the town.* Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himſelf contributed to raiſe it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much miſchief, unleſs they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent burſts of reſentment gave reaſon to ſuſpect. He is always angry at ſome paſt, or afraid of ſome future cenſure; but he leſſens the ſmart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the ſhafts of criticiſm by oppoſing a ſhield of adamantine confidence.

The

The perpetual accuſation produced againſt him, was that of plagiariſm, againſt which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps ſometimes injuriouſly cenſured, he would by denying part of the charge have confeſſed the reſt; and as his adverſaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power againſt facts, wiſely left in that perplexity which generality produces a queſtion which it was his intereſt to ſuppreſs, and which, unleſs provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to ſixty-three, may be ſuppoſed to have been ſufficiently buſied by the compoſition of eight and twenty pieces for the ſtage, Dryden found room in the ſame ſpace for many other undertakings.

But, how much ſoever he wrote, he was at leaſt once ſuſpected of writing more; for in 1679 a paper of verſes, called *an Eſſay on Satire*, was ſhewn about in manuſcript, by which the earl of Rocheſter, the dutcheſs of Portſmouth, and others, were ſo much provoked,

voked, that, as was ſuppoſed, for the actors were never diſcovered, they procured Dryden, whom they ſuſpected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the duke of Buckinghamſhire, the true writer, in his Art of Poetry; where he ſays of Dryden,

Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
His own deſerves as great applauſe ſometimes."

His reputation in time was ſuch, that his name was thought neceſſary to the ſucceſs of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute ſomething, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the Life of Polybius to the tranſlation of Sir Henry Sheers; and thoſe of Lucian and Plutarch to verſions of their works by different hands. Of the Engliſh Tacitus he tranſlated the firſt book; and, if Gordon be credited, tranſlated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without ſome degree of indignation; but it is not, I ſuppoſe, ſo much to be inferred that Dryden wanted the literature neceſſary to the peruſal of Tacitus, as that, conſidering himſelf as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and writing merely

merely for money, was contented to get it by the neareſt way.

In 1680, the Epiſtles of Ovid being tranſlated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was neceſſary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on ſuch occaſions was regularly ſummoned, prefixed a diſcourſe upon tranſlation, which was then ſtruggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it ſhould find any difficulty in breaking the ſhackles of verbal interpretation, which muſt for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day obſerved. The authority of Jonſon, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgement of the nation; and it was not eaſily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conſpicuous by uniting politicks with poetry, in the memorable ſatire called *Abſalom and Achitophel*, written againſt the faction which,

by lord Shafteſbury's incitement, ſet the duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which perſonal ſatire was applied to the ſupport of publick principles, and in which therefore every mind was intereſted, the reception was eager, and the ſale ſo large, that my father, an old bookſeller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell's* trial.

The reaſon of this general peruſal Addiſon has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the inveſtigation of ſecrets; and thinks that curioſity to decypher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why thoſe verſes were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the cooperation of all the factious paſſions, and filled every mind with triumph or reſentment.

It could not be ſuppoſed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without reſiſtance or reply. Both his perſon and his party were expoſed in their turns to the ſhafts of ſatire, which, though neither ſo well

well pointed nor perhaps ſo well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of theſe poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muſe*; aſcribed, though, as Pope ſays, falſely, to *Somers*, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whoſe ſoever it was, has much virulence, and ſome ſpritelineſs. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel* had two anſwers, now both forgotten; one called *Azaria and Huſhia*; the other *Abſalom ſenior*. Of theſe hoſtile compoſitions, Dryden apparently imputes *Abſalom ſenior* to *Settle*, by quoting in his verſes againſt him the ſecond line. *Azaria and Huſhia* was, as *Wood* ſays, imputed to him, though it is ſomewhat unlikely that he ſhould write twice on the ſame occaſion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical tranſactions.

The ſame year he publiſhed the *Medal*, of which the ſubject is a medal ſtruck on lord Shafteſbury's eſcape from a proſecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In

In both poems he maintains the ſame principles, and ſaw them both attacked by the ſame antagoniſt. Elkanah Settle, who had anſwered *Abſalom*, appeared with equal courage in oppoſition to the *Medal*, and publiſhed an anſwer called *The Medal reverſed*, with ſo much ſucceſs in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the ſuffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or ſuch is the prevalence of faſhion, that the man whoſe works have not yet been thought to deſerve the care of collecting them; who died forgotten in an hoſpital; and whoſe latter years were ſpent in contriving ſhows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occaſionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the ſame, to every houſe where there was a funeral or a wedding; might, with truth, have had inſcribed upon his ſtone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagoniſt of Dryden.

Settle was, for this rebellion, ſeverely chaſtiſed by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the ſecond part of *Abſalom and Achitophel*, and was perhaps for his factious audacity

city made the city poet, whoſe annual office was to deſcribe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of theſe bards he was the laſt, and ſeems not much to have deſerved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyrick on the virtues of judge Jefferies, and what more could have been done by the meaneſt zealot for prerogative?

Of tranſlated fragments, or occaſional poems, to enumerate the titles, or ſettle the dates would be tedious, with little uſe. It may be obſerved, that as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by ſome perſonal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the acceſſion of king James, when the deſign of reconciling the nation to the church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himſelf a convert to popery. This at any other time might have paſſed with little cenſure. Sir *Kenelm Digby* embraced popery; the two *Reinolds* reciprocally converted one another; and *Chillingworth* himſelf was a while ſo entangled in the wilds of controverſy, as to retire

tire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and ſtudy can find ſuch difficulties, or ſuch motives, as may either unite them to the church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a proteſtant, ſhould by an artful and experienced diſputant be made a papiſt, overborn by the ſudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a repreſentation which ſhews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That converſion will always be ſuſpected that apparently concurs with intereſt. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progreſs towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love Truth only for herſelf. Yet it may eaſily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and as truth and intereſt are not by any fatal neceſſity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are ſtruggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are oppoſed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profeſſion would perhaps have changed it before,

with

with the like opportunities of inſtruction. This was then the ſtate of popery; every artifice was uſed to ſhew it in its faireſt form; and it muſt be owned to be a religion of external appearance ſufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehenſive is likewiſe an elevated ſoul, and that whoever is wiſe is alſo honeſt. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different ſtudies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controverſy, and wanted rather ſkill to diſcover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we muſt now leave him to his Judge.

The prieſts, having ſtrengthened their cauſe by ſo powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controverſial papers found in the ſtrong-box of Charles the ſecond, and, what yet was harder, to defend them againſt Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting popery, he was employed to tranſlate Maimbourg's Hiſtory

of the League; which he publiſhed, with a large introduction. His name is likewiſe prefixed to the Engliſh Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himſelf the tranſlator. Perhaps the uſe of his name was a pious fraud, which however ſeems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The verſion of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occaſion of it is ſaid to have been, that the Queen, when ſhe ſolicited a ſon, made vows to him as her tutelary ſaint.

He was ſuppoſed to have undertaken to tranſlate *Varillas's Hiſtory of Hereſies*; and when *Burnet* publiſhed Remarks upon it, to have written an *Anſwer*; upon which Burnet makes the following obſervation:

"I have been informed from England, "that a gentleman, who is famous both for "poetry and ſeveral other things, had ſpent "three months in tranſlating M. Varillas's "Hiſtory; but that, as ſoon as my Reflec- "tions appeared, he diſcontinued his la- "bour,

" bour, finding the credit of his author was
" gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered
" by his Anſwer, he will perhaps go on with
" his tranſlation; and this may be, for aught
" I know, as good an entertainment for
" him as the converſation that he had ſet on
" between the Hinds and Panthers, and all
" the reſt of animals, for whom M. Varil-
" las may ſerve well enough as an author:
" and this hiſtory and that poem are ſuch
" extraordinary things of their kind, that it
" will be but ſuitable to ſee the author of
" the worſt poem become likewiſe the tranſ-
" lator of the worſt hiſtory that the age has
" produced. If his grace and his wit im-
" prove both proportionably, he will hardly
" find that he has gained much by the change
" he has made, from having no religion to
" chuſe one of the worſt. It is true, he
" had ſomewhat to ſink from in matter of
" wit; but as for his morals, it is ſcarce
" poſſible for him to grow a worſe man than
" he was. He has lately wreaked his ma-
" lice on me for ſpoiling his three months
" labour; but in it he has done me all the
" honour that any man can receive from him,
" which is to be railed at by him. If I had

" ill-nature enough to prompt me to wiſh a
" very bad wiſh for him, it ſhould be, that
" he would go on and finiſh his tranſlation.
" By that it will appear, whether the Eng-
" liſh nation, which is the moſt competent
" judge in this matter, has, upon the ſeeing
" our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas's
" favour, or in mine. It is true, Mr. D.
" will ſuffer a little by it; but at leaſt it will
" ſerve to keep him in from other extrava-
" gancies; and if he gains little honour by
" this work, yet he cannot loſe ſo much by
" it as he has done by his laſt employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in Theological controverſy, he was deſirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profeſſion. To reaſon in verſe was, indeed, one of his powers; but ſubtilty and harmony united are ſtill feeble, when oppoſed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he publiſhed the *Hind and Panther*, a poem in which the church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, defends

ſends her tenets againſt the church of England, repreſented by the *Panther*, a beaſt beautiful, but ſpotted.

A fable which exhibits two beaſts talking Theology, appears at once full of abſurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the firſt ſpecimen of his abilities.

The converſion of ſuch a man, at ſuch a time, was not likely to paſs uncenſured. Three dialogues were publiſhed by the facetious *Thomas Brown*, of which the two firſt were called *Reaſons of Mr. Bayes's changing his religion*: and the third *The Reaſons of Mr. Hains the player's converſion and re-converſion*. The firſt was printed in 1688, the ſecond not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour ſeems to have been long continued, and the ſubject to have ſtrongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two firſt dialogues *Bayes* is brought into the company of *Crites* and *Eugenius*,

with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. *Bayes* and Mr. *Hains*.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor deſtitute of fancy; but he ſeems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon ſmall jeſts or groſs buffoonery, ſo that his performances have little intrinſick value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occaſioned them.

Theſe dialogues are like his other works: what ſenſe or knowledge they contain, is diſgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great ſource of pleaſure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. *Ajax*, who happens to be mentioned, is *he that wore as many cowhides upon his ſhield as would have furniſhed half the king's army with ſhoe-leather*.

Being aſked whether he has ſeen the *Hind and Panther*, Crites anſwers: *Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can ſtir no where but it perſues me; it haunts me worſe than a poſter-buttoned*

buttoned ſerjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a band-box, when my laundreſs brings home my linen; ſometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-houſe; ſometimes it ſurpriſes me in a trunkmaker's ſhop; and ſometimes it refreſhes my memory for me on the backſide of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only ſeen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occaſion as a frugal tradeſman can quote that noble treatiſe the Worth of a Penny *to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in ſtewed apples, and penny cuſtards.*

The whole animation of theſe compoſitions ariſes from a profuſion of ludicrous and affected compariſons. *To ſecure one's chaſtity,* ſays Bayes, *little more is neceſſary than to leave off a correſpondence with the other ſex, which, to a wiſe man, is no greater a puniſhment than it would be to a fanatick parſon to be forbid* ſeeing *the* Cheats *and the* Committee; *or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the ſight of the* London Cuckold.—This is the general ſtrain, and therefore I ſhall be eaſily excuſed the labour of more tranſcription.

Brown does not wholly forget paſt tranſactions: *You began*, ſays Crites *to* Bayes, *with a very indifferent religion, and have not mended the matter in your laſt choice. It was but reaſon that your Muſe, which appeared firſt in a Tyrant's quarrel, ſhould employ her laſt efforts to juſtify the uſurpations of the* Hind.

Next year the nation was ſummoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouſe his imagination, and ſtrain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuſe the anticipated bleſſings. He publiſhed a poem, filled with predictions of greatneſs and proſperity; predictions of which it is not neceſſary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months paſſed after theſe joyful notes, and every bloſſom of popiſh hope was blaſted for ever by the Revolution. A papiſt now could be no longer Laureat. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with ſo much pride and praiſe, was transferred to Shadwel, an old enemy, whom he had formerly ſtigmatiſed

ſtigmatiſed by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was depoſed; but ſeemed very angry that Shadwel ſucceeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquiſitely ſatirical, called *Mac Flecno*; of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himſelf declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diverſified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorſet, when, as chamberlain, he was conſtrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purſe an allowance equal to the ſalary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generoſity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims leſs cogent, by men leſs famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always repreſented himſelf as ſuffering under a publick infliction; and once particularly demands reſpect for the patience with which he endured the loſs of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to ſuppreſs his bounty; but if he ſuffered nothing, he ſhould not have complained.

During

During the ſhort reign of king James he had written nothing for the ſtage, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controverſy and flattery. Of praiſe he might perhaps have been leſs laviſh without inconvenience, for James was never ſaid to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for ſupport to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either conſidering himſelf as diſcountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a ſecond revolution, he produced *Don Sebaſtian*, in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new verſion of Juvenal and Perſius. Of Juvenal he tranſlated the firſt, third, ſixth, tenth, and ſixteenth ſatires; and of Perſius the whole work. On this occaſion he introduced his two ſons to the publick, as nurſelings of the Muſes. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the ſeventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a ver-

a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to lord Dorſet; and there gives an account of the deſign which he had once formed to write an epick poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He conſidered the epick as neceſſarily including ſome kind of ſupernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of conteſt between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be repreſented zealous for his charge, without any intended oppoſition to the purpoſes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds muſt in part be ignorant.

This is the moſt reaſonable ſcheme of celeſtial interpoſition that ever was formed. The ſurprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have ſucceeded to the intrigues and oppoſitions of pagan deities, afford very ſtriking ſcenes, and open a vaſt extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau obſerves, and Boileau will be ſeldom found miſtaken, with this incurable defect, that in a conteſt between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reaſon we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curioſity than terror.

In

In the ſcheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had addreſs enough to ſurmount. In a war juſtice can be but on one ſide; and to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he muſt fight in the defence of indubitable right. Yet ſome of the celeſtial beings, thus oppoſed to each other, muſt have been repreſented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reaſonably to be lamented. It would doubtleſs have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleaſing inſtruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indiſpenſable condition of ſuch an undertaking, a publick ſtipend, was not likely in thoſe times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, and the nation had not yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with ſtealing; only, ſays he, *the guardian angels*

of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage.

In 1694, he began the moſt laborious and difficult of all his works, the tranſlation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Freſnoy's Art of Painting into Engliſh proſe. The preface, which he boaſts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miſcellaneous collection of critical remarks, ſuch as coſt a mind ſtored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he publiſhed his verſion of the works of Virgil; and that no opportunity of profit might be loſt, dedicated the Paſtorals to the lord Clifford, the Georgics to the earl of Cheſterfield, and the Eneid to the earl of Mulgrave. This œconomy of flattery, at once laviſh and diſcreet, did not paſs without obſervation.

This tranſlation was cenſured by Milbourne, a clergyman, ſtyled by Pope *the fairеſt of critiсks*, becauſe he exhibited his own verſion to be compared with that which he condemned.

His

His laſt work was his Fables, publiſhed in 1699, in conſequence, as is ſuppoſed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonſon; by which he obliged himſelf, in conſideration of three hundred pounds, to finiſh for the preſs ten thouſand verſes.

In this volume is compriſed the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he ſpent a fortnight in compoſing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whoſe *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred forty-ſix lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to reviſe it!

Part of this book of Fables is the firſt Iliad in Engliſh, intended as a ſpecimen of a verſion of the whole. Conſidering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his ſchemes and labours.

C.

On the firſt of May 1701, having been ſome time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-ſtreet of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild ſtory relating to ſome vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary:

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wedneſday "morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then biſhop "of Rocheſter and dean of Weſtminſter, "ſent the next day to the lady Elizabeth "Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he "would make a preſent of the ground, "which was forty-pounds, with all the other "Abbey-fees. The lord Halifax likewiſe "ſent to the lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles "Dryden her ſon, that, if they would "give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he "would inter him with a gentleman's pri-"vate funeral, and afterwards beſtow five "hundred pounds on a monument in the "Abbey; which, as they had no reaſon to

"refuſe,

" refuſe, they accepted. On the Saturday
" following the company came: the corpſe
" was put into a velvet hearſe, and eighteen
" mourning coaches, filled with company,
" attended. When they were juſt ready to
" move, the lord Jeffries, ſon of the lord
" chancellor Jeffries, with ſome of his rakiſh
" companions coming by, aſked whoſe fu-
" neral it was: and being told Mr. Dry-
" den's, he ſaid, " What, ſhall Dryden, the
" greateſt honour and ornament of the nation,
" be buried after this private manner! No,
" gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden,
" and honour his memory, alight and join
" with me in gaining my lady's conſent to
" let me have the honour of his interment,
" which ſhall be after another manner than
" this; and I will beſtow a thouſand pounds
" on a monument in the Abbey for him."
" The gentlemen in the coaches, not know-
" ing of the biſhop of Rocheſter's favour,
" nor of the lord Halifax's generous deſign
" (they both having, out of reſpect to the
" family, enjoined the lady Elizabeth and
" her ſon to keep their favour concealed to
" the world, and let it paſs for their own
" expence) readily came out of the coaches,
" and

" and attended lord Jefferies up to the lady's
" bedſide, who was then ſick; he repeated
" the purport of what he had before ſaid;
" but ſhe abſolutely refuſing, he fell on his
" knees, vowing never to riſe till his re-
" queſt was granted. The reſt of the com-
" pany by his deſire kneeled alſo; and the
" lady, being under a ſudden ſurprize, faint-
" ed away. As ſoon as ſhe recovered her
" ſpeech, ſhe cried, *No, no.* Enough, gen-
" tlemen, replied he; my lady is very good,
" ſhe ſays, *Go, go.* She repeated her for-
" mer words with all her ſtrength, but in
" vain; for her feeble voice was loſt in their
" acclamations of joy; and the lord Jefferies
" ordered the hearſemen to carry the corpſe to
" Mr. Ruſſel's, an undertaker's in Cheap-
" ſide, and leave it there till he ſhould ſend
" orders for the embalment, which, he add-
" ed, ſhould be after the royal manner.
" His directions were obeyed, the company
" diſperſed, and lady Elizabeth and her ſon
" remained inconſolable. The next day
" Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the lord
" Halifax and the biſhop, to excuſe his mo-
" ther and himſelf, by relating the real truth.
" But neither his lordſhip nor the biſhop

"would admit of any plea; eſpecially "the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, "the ground opened, the choir attending, "an anthem ready ſet, and himſelf waiting "for ſome time without any corpſe to bury. "The undertaker, after three days expec- "tance of orders for embalment without "receiving any, waited on the lord Jefferies; "who pretending ignorance of the matter, "turned it off with an ill-natured jeſt, ſay- "ing, That thoſe who obſerved the orders "of a drunken frolick deſerved no better; "that he remembered nothing at all of it; "and that he might do what he pleaſed with "the corpſe. Upon this, the undertaker "waited upon the lady Elizabeth and her "ſon, and threatned to bring the corpſe "home, and ſet it before the door. They "deſired a day's reſpite, which was granted. "Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handſome "letter to the lord Jefferies, who returned it "with this cool anſwer, "That he knew "nothing of the matter, and would be trou- "bled no more about it." He then addreſſ- "ed the lord Halifax and the biſhop of Ro- "cheſter, who abſolutely refuſed to do any "thing in it. In this diſtreſs Dr. Garth ſent

"for

"for the corpſe to the College of Phyſicians,
"and propoſed a funeral by ſubſcription,
"to which himſelf ſet a moſt noble example.
"At laſt a day, about three weeks after Mr.
"Dryden's deceaſe, was appointed for the
"interment: Dr. Garth pronounced a fine
"Latin oration, at the College, over the
"corpſe; which was attended to the Abbey
"by a numerous train of coaches. When
"the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden
"ſent a challenge to the lord Jefferies, who
"refuſing to anſwer it, he ſent ſeveral others,
"and went often himſelf; but could nei-
"ther get a letter delivered, nor admittance
"to ſpeak to him: which ſo incenſed him,
"that he reſolved, ſince his lordſhip refuſed
"to anſwer him like a gentleman, that he
"would watch an opportunity to meet, and
"fight off-hand, though with all the rules
"of honour; which his lordſhip hearing,
"left the town: and Mr. Charles Dryden
"could never have the ſatisfaction of meet-
"ing him, though he ſought it till his death
"with the utmoſt application."

This ſtory I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence; but having

been ſince informed that there is in the regiſter of the College of Phyſicians an order relating to Dryden's funeral, I can doubt its truth no longer.

The gradual change of manners, though inperceptible in the proceſs, appears great when different times, and thoſe not very diſtant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken Lord ſhould interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be juſtled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he ſhould thruſt himſelf into a houſe, he would be ſent roughly away; and what is yet more to the honour of the preſent time, I believe, that thoſe who had ſubſcribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for ſuch an accident, have withdrawn their contributions.

He was buried among the poets in Weſtminſter Abbey, where, though the duke of Newcaſtle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramatick works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without diſtinction, till the duke of Buckinghamſhire gave

gave him a tablet, inſcribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkſhire, with circumſtances, according to the ſatire imputed to lord Somers, not very honourable to either party: by her he had three ſons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was uſher of the palace to pope Clement the XIth, and viſiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to ſwim croſs the Thames at Windſor.

John was author of a comedy called *The Huſband his own Cuckold.* He is ſaid to have died at Rome. Henry entered into ſome religious order. It is ſome proof of Dryden's ſincerity in his ſecond religion, that he taught it to his ſons. A man conſcious of hypocritical profeſſion in himſelf, is not likely to convert others; and as his ſons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the tranſlators of Juvenal, they muſt have been taught ſome religion before their father's change.

Of the perſon of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which

has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is ſuch as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of a "nature exceedingly humane and compaſ- "ſionate, ready to forgive injuries, and ca- "pable of a ſincere reconciliation with thoſe "that had offended him. His friendſhip, "where he profeſſed it, went beyond his "profeſſions. He was of a very eaſy, "of very pleaſing acceſs; but ſomewhat "ſlow, and, as it were, diffident in his ad- "vances to others: he had that in his na- "ture which abhorred intruſion into any ſo- "ciety whatever. He was therefore leſs "known, and conſequently his character be- "came more liable to miſapprehenſions and "miſrepreſentations: he was very modeſt, "and very eaſily to be diſcountenanced in "his approaches to his equals or ſuperiors. "As his reading had been very extenſive, ſo "was he very happy in a memory tenacious "of every thing that he had read. He was "not more poſſeſſed of knowledge than he "was communicative of it; but then his "communication was by no means pedan- "tick, or impoſed upon the converſation,

"but

" but juſt ſuch, and went ſo far as, by the " natural turn of the converſation in which " he was engaged, it was neceſſarily pro- " moted or required. He was extreme " ready, and gentle in his correction of the " errors of any writer who thought fit to " conſult him, and full as ready and patient " to admit of the reprehenſions of others, " in reſpect of his own overſights or miſ- " takes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondneſs of friendſhip; and to have excited that fondneſs in ſuch a mind is no ſmall degree of praiſe. The diſpoſition of Dryden, however, is ſhewn in this character rather as it exhibited itſelf in curſory converſation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendſhip indeed were ſolid virtues; but courteſy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the reſt muſt be collected as it can from other teſtimonies, and particularly from thoſe notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himſelf.

The modeſty which made him ſo ſlow to advance, and ſo eaſy to be repulſed, was certainly no ſuſpicion of deficient merit, or unconſciouſneſs of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have ſet a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his converſation, becauſe he expected it to be ſolicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not ſubmiſſive but indignant, with ſuch reverence of his own greatneſs as made him unwilling to expoſe it to neglect or violation.

His modeſty was by no means inconſiſtent with oſtentatiouſneſs: he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expreſſes with very little ſcruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his ſelf-commendations are read without ſcorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankneſs.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himſelf exempted him from

from jealouſy of others. He is accuſed of envy and inſidiouſneſs; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to tranſlate Horace, that he might loſe the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately diſcover that it is merely conjectural; the purpoſe was ſuch as no man would confeſs; and a crime that admits no proof, why ſhould we believe?

He has been deſcribed as magiſterially preſiding over the younger writers, and aſſuming the diſtribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whoſe judgement is inconteſtable may, without uſurpation, examine and decide.

Congreve repreſents him as ready to adviſe and inſtruct; but there is reaſon to believe that his communciation was rather uſeful than entertaining. He declares of himſelf that he was ſaturnine, and not one of thoſe whoſe ſpritely ſayings diverted company; and one of his cenſurers makes him ſay,

Nor

Nor wine nor love could ever ſee me gay;
To writing bred, I knew not what to ſay.

There are men whoſe powers operate only at leiſure and in retirement, and whoſe intellectual vigour deſerts them in converſation; whom merriment confuſes, and objection diſconcerts; whoſe baſhfulneſs reſtrains their exertion, and ſuffers them not to ſpeak till the time of ſpeaking is paſt; or whoſe attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been conſidered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's ſluggiſhneſs in converſation it is vain to ſearch or to gueſs the cauſe. He certainly wanted neither ſentiments nor language; his intellectual treaſures were great, though they were locked up from his own uſe. *His thoughts*, when he wrote, *flowed in upon him ſo faſt, that his only care was which to chuſe, and which to reject.* Such rapidity of compoſition naturally promiſes a flow of talk, yet we muſt be content to believe what an enemy ſays of him, when he likewiſe ſays it of himſelf. But whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he

he lived in familiarity with the higheſt perſons of his time. It is related by Carte of the duke of Ormond, that he uſed often to paſs a night with Dryden, and thoſe with whom Dryden conſorted: who they were, Carte has not told; but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond ſat was not ſurrounded with a plebeian ſociety. He was indeed reproached with boaſting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will ſupport him in the opinion, that to pleaſe ſuperiours is not the loweſt kind of merit.

The merit of pleaſing muſt, however, be eſtimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Careſſes and preferments are often beſtowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleaſure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any perſonal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accuſed him of lewdneſs in his converſation; but if accuſation without proof be credited, who ſhall be innocent?

His

His works afford too many examples of diſſolute licentiouſneſs, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and conſtrained; the effects of ſtudy and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleaſure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itſelf with ideal wickedneſs for the ſake of ſpreading the contagion in ſociety, I wiſh not to conceal or excuſe the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, ſuch abuſe of ſuperlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What conſolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to teſtify his repentance.

Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predeceſſors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanneſs and ſervility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, ſince the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by

Afra Behn in an addreſs to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the taſk of praiſe, he no longer retains ſhame in himſelf, nor ſuppoſes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are obſerved to diffuſe perfumes from year to year, without ſenſible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoveriſhed his mint of flattery by his expences, however laviſh. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endleſs variation; and when he had ſcattered on the hero of the day the golden ſhower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wiſhed to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another ſtamp. Of this kind of meanneſs he never ſeems to decline the practice, or lament the neceſſity: he conſiders the great as entitled to encomiaſtick homage, and brings praiſe rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the proſtitution of his judgement. It is indeed not certain, that on theſe occaſions his judgement much rebelled againſt his intereſt. There are minds which eaſily ſink into ſubmiſſion, that look on grandeur with undiſtinguiſhing

undiſtinguiſhing reverence, and diſcover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praiſes of others and of himſelf is always intermingled a ſtrain of diſcontent and lamentation, a ſullen growl of reſentment, or a querulous murmur of diſtreſs. His works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and *he has few thanks to pay his ſtars that he was born among Engliſhmen.* To his criticks he is ſometimes contemptuous, ſometimes reſentful, and ſometimes ſubmiſſive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, miſtakes his intereſt when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by ſhewing that he was affected by their cenſures, and gives laſting importance to names, which, left to themſelves, would vaniſh from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not oft depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he ſeldom pollutes his page with an adverſe name. He condeſcended indeed to a controverſy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be conſidered rather as aſſaulting than repelling; and ſince Settle is ſunk into oblivion,

livion, his libel remains injurious only to himſelf.

Among anſwers to criticks, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are, like other poems, effuſions of genius, produced as much to obtain praiſe as to obviate cenſure. Theſe Dryden practiſed, and in theſe he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the preface to his Fables. To the cenſure of Collier, whoſe remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticiſms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of ſixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouſe. He complains of Collier's rudeneſs, and the *horſe-play of his raillery*; and aſſerts that *in many places he has perverted by his gloſſes the meaning* of what he cenſures; but in other things he confeſſes that he is juſtly taxed; and ſays, with great calmneſs and candour, *I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expreſſions of mine that can be truly accuſed of obſcenity, immorality, or profaneneſs, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend,*

friend, he will be glad of my repentance. Yet, as our beſt diſpoſitions are imperfect, he left ſtanding in the ſame book a reflection on Collier of great aſperity, and indeed of more aſperity than wit.

Blackmore he repreſents as made his enemy by the poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel*, which *he thinks a little hard upon his fanatick patrons*; and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the preface to Juvenal, *though he had*, ſays he, *the baſeneſs not to acknowledge his benefactor, but inſtead of it to traduce me in a libel.*

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a *Satire upon Wit*; in which, having lamented the exuberance of falſe wit and the deficiency of true, he propoſes that all wit ſhould be recoined before it is current, and appoints maſters of aſſay who ſhall reject all that is light or debaſed.

'Tis true, that when the coarſe and worthleſs droſs
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loſs;
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,
When thus refin'd, will grievous ſufferers be;

Into the melting-pot when Dryden comes,
What horrid ſtench will riſe, what noiſome fumes!
How will he ſhrink, when all his lewd allay,
And wicked mixture, ſhall be purg'd away!

Thus ſtands the paſſage in the laſt edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the cenſure, beginning thus:

But what remains will be ſo pure, 'twill bear
Th' examination of the moſt ſevere.

Blackmore, finding the cenſure reſented, and the civility diſregarded, ungenerouſly omitted the ſofter part. Such variations diſcover a writer who conſults his paſſions more than his virtue; and it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cauſe.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, ſuch as are always ready at the call of anger, whether juſt or not: a ſhort extract will be ſufficient. *He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon prieſthood; if I have, I am only to aſk pardon of good prieſts, and am afraid his ſhare of the reparation will come to little. Let him be ſatisfied that he*

ſhall never be able to force himſelf upon me for an adverſary; I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him.

As for the reſt of thoſe who have written againſt me, they are ſuch ſcoundrels that they deſerve not the leaſt notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only diſtinguiſhed from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy.

Dryden indeed diſcovered, in many of his writings, an affected and abſurd malignity to prieſts and prieſthood, which naturally raiſed him many enemies, and which was ſometimes as unſeaſonably reſented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the ſacrificer in the *Georgicks* the *holy butcher:* the tranſlation is indeed ridiculous; but Trapp's anger ariſes from his zeal, not for the author, but the prieſt; as if any reproach of the follies of paganiſm could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's diſlike of the prieſthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulſe which he ſuffered when he ſo-

licited ordination; but he denies, in the preface to his Fables, that he ever deſigned to enter into the church; and ſuch a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falſehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is ſeldom at a great diſtance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this obſervation. His writings exhibit many paſſages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occaſions, are ſuch as piety would not have admitted, and ſuch as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he diſbelieved the religion which he diſobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than diſowned it. His tendency to profaneneſs is the effect of levity, negligence, and looſe converſation, with a deſire of accommodating himſelf to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durſt. When he profeſſed himſelf a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity.

The perſecution of criticks was not the worſt of his vexations; he was much more diſturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are ſo frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakneſs ſinking in endleſs miſery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impoſſible not to deteſt the age which could impoſe on ſuch a man the neceſſity of ſuch ſolicitations, or not to deſpiſe the man who could ſubmit to ſuch ſolicitations without neceſſity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greateſt part of his life was paſſed in exigencies. Such outcries were ſurely never uttered but in ſevere pain. Of his ſupplies or his expences no probable eſtimate can now be made. Except the ſalary of the Laureate, to which king James added the office of Hiſtoriographer, perhaps with ſome additional emoluments, his whole revenue ſeems to have been caſual; and it is well known that he ſeldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always

ways liberal, and they that truſt her promiſes make little ſcruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By diſcourſing with the late amiable Mr. Tonſon, I could not find that any memorials of the tranſactions between his predeceſſor and Dryden had been preſerved, except the following papers:

"I do hereby promiſe to pay John Dry-
"den, Eſq; or order, on the 25th of March
"1699, the ſum of two hundred and fifty
"guineas, in conſideration of ten thouſand
"verſes, which the ſaid John Dryden, Eſq;
"is to deliver to me Jacob Tonſon, when
"finiſhed, whereof ſeven thouſand five hun-
"dred verſes, more or leſs, are already in
"the ſaid Jacob Tonſon's poſſeſſion. And
"I do hereby farther promiſe, and engage
"myſelf, to make up the ſaid ſum of two
"hundred and fifty guineas three hundred
"pounds ſterling to the ſaid John Dryden,
"Eſq; his executors, adminiſtrators, or aſ-

" ſigns, at the beginning of the ſecond im-
" preſſion of the ſaid ten thouſand verſes.

" In witneſs whereof I have hereunto ſet
" my hand and ſeal, this 10th day of March,
" 169⅞.

" Jacob Tonſon,

" Sealed and delivered, being firſt
" duly ſtampt, purſuant to the acts
" of parliament for that purpoſe,
" in the preſence of

" Ben. Portlock.
" Will. Congreve."

" March 24th, 1698.

" Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonſon the
" ſum of two hundred ſixty-eight pounds
" fifteen ſhillings, in purſuance of an agree-
" ment for ten thouſand verſes, to be deliver-
" ed by me to the ſaid Jacob Tonſon,
" whereof I have already delivered to him
" about ſeven thouſand five hundred, more
" or leſs; he the ſaid Jacob Tonſon being
" obliged to make up the foreſaid ſum of
" two hundred ſixty-eight pounds fifteen
" ſhillings three hundred pounds, at the

" be[illegible]ning

"beginning of the ſecond impreſſion of the "foreſaid ten thouſand verſes;

"I ſay, received by me

"John Dryden.

"Witneſs Charles Dryden."

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifeſt from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thouſand verſes, and for which therefore the payment muſt have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he deſires Tonſon to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his ſon, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable conſequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourſe in his exigencies but to his bookſeller. The particular character of Tonſon I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much leſs liberal in thoſe times

than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners groſſer. To the mercantile ruggedneſs of that race, the delicacy of the poet was ſometimes expoſed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he viſited Dryden, they heard, as they were converſing, another perſon entering the houſe. "This," ſaid Dryden; "is Tonſon. You will take care not to de-"part before he goes away; for I have not "completed the ſheet which I promiſed him; "and if you leave me unprotected, I muſt "ſuffer all the rudeneſs to which his re-"ſentment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, beſides the payment of the bookſeller, cannot be known; Mr. Derrick, who conſulted ſome of his relations, was informed that his fables obtained five hundred pounds from the dutcheſs of Ormond; a preſent not unſuitable to the magnificence of that ſplendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a muſical ſociety for the uſe of *Alexander's Feaſt*.

In

In thoſe days the œconomy of government was yet unſettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this diſorder there is reaſon to believe that the Laureat ſometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of thoſe, who, being intruſted with the diſtribution of the Prince's bounty, ſuffer thoſe that depend upon it to languiſh in penury.

Of his petty habits or ſlight amuſements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was perſonally known, one told me that at the houſe which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-houſe, the appeal upon any literary diſpute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a ſettled and preſcriptive place by the fire, was in the ſummer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his ſummer ſeat. This is all the intelligence which his two ſurvivors afforded me.

Of

Of one opinon he is very reaſonably ſuſpected, which will do him no honour in the preſent age, though in his own time, at leaſt in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himſelf. There is little doubt that he put confidence in the prognoſtications of judicial aſtrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of ſome of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity; and, without authority, it is uſeleſs to mention what is ſo unlikely to be true. That he had the configurations of the planets in his mind, and conſidered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

> The utmoſt malice of the ſtars is paſt.—
> Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
> And *high-rais'd Jove*, from his dark priſon freed,
> Thoſe weights took off that on his planet hung,
> Will glorioufly the new-laid works ſucceed.

He has elſewhere ſhewn his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to juſtify his

his ſuperſtition, by attributing the ſame to ſome of the Ancients.

So ſlight and ſo ſcanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domeſtick manners of a man, whom every Engliſh generation muſt mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

DRYDEN may be properly conſidered as the father of Engliſh criticiſm, as the writer who firſt taught us to determine upon principles the merit of compoſition. Of our former poets, the greateſt dramatiſt wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely miſled, and rarely deſerted him. Of the reſt, thoſe who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two *Arts of Engliſh Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which ſomething might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonſon and Cowley; but Dryden's *Eſſay on Dramatick Poetry* was the firſt regular treatiſe on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the preſent age of Engliſh literature, turns back to peruſe this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increaſe of knowledge, or much novelty of inſtruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them

them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The ſtructure of dramatick poems was not then generally underſtood. Audiences applauded by inſtinct, and poets perhaps often pleaſed by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpoſe loſes himſelf in his own luſtre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceaſes to be examined. Of an art univerſally practiſed, the firſt teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of ſomething which we have beſtowed upon ourſelves, as the dew appears to riſe from the field which it refreſhes.

To judge rightly of an author, we muſt tranſport ourſelves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of ſupplying them. That which is eaſy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at leaſt imported his ſcience, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own ſkill.

The

The dialogue on the Drama was one of his firſt eſſays of criticiſm, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himſelf ſomewhat to remit, when his name gave ſanction to his poſitions, and his awe of the publick was abated, partly by cuſtom, and partly by ſucceſs. It will not be eaſy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatiſe ſo artfully variegated with ſucceſſive repreſentations of oppoſite probabilities, ſo enlivened with imagery, ſo brightned with illuſtrations. His portraits of the Engliſh dramatiſts are wrought with great ſpirit and diligence. The account of Shakſpeare may ſtand as a perpetual model of encomiaſtick criticiſm; exact without minuteneſs, and lofty without exaggeration. The praiſe laviſhed by Longinus, on the atteſtation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demoſthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, ſo extenſive in its comprehenſion, and ſo curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminiſhed, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakſpeare, in all their emulation of reverence,

verence, boaſt of much more than of having diffuſed and paraphraſed this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baſer metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other eſſays on the ſame ſubject, the criticiſm of Dryden is the criticiſm of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the cenſor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous diſſertation, where delight is mingled with inſtruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement, by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was ſaid of a diſpute between two mathematicians, "malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte ſapere;" that *it was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other.* A tendency of the ſame kind every mind muſt feel at the peruſal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's diſcourſes:

diſcourſes. With Dryden we are wandering in queſt of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dreſt in the graces of elegance; and if we miſs her, the labour of the purſuit rewards itſelf; we are led only through fragrance and flowers: Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every ſtep is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulſive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticiſm has the majeſty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had ſtudied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increaſing, he had his mind ſtored with principles and obſervations; he poured out his knowledge with great liberality, and ſeldom publiſhed any work without a critical diſſertation, by which he encreaſed the book and the price, with little labour to himſelf; for of labour, notwithſtanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondneſs for the

employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingneſs to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied purſuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His Criticiſm may be conſidered as general or occaſional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the ſtructure of the human mind, he may doubtleſs be ſafely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occaſional and particular poſitions were ſometimes intereſted, ſometimes negligent, and ſometimes capricious. It is not without reaſon that Trapp, ſpeaking of the praiſes which he beſtows on Palamon and Arcite, ſays, "Novimus judicium "Drydeni de poemate quodam *Chauceri*, "pulchro ſane illo, et admodum laudando, "nimirum quod non modo vere epicum ſit, "ſed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo "ſuperet. Sed novimus eodem tempore "viri illius maximi non ſemper accuratiſ-"ſimas eſſe cenſuras, nec ad ſeveriſſimam "critices normam exactas: illo judice id "plerumque optimum eſt, quod nunc præ

" manibus habet, & in quo nunc occu-
" patur."

He is therefore by no means conſtant to himſelf. His defence and deſertion of dramatick rhyme is generally known. *Spence*, in his remarks on Pope's Odyſſey, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the Eneid, in favour of tranſlating an epick poem into blank verſe; but he forgets that when his author attempted the Iliad, ſome years afterwards, he departed from his own deciſion, and tranſlated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licenſe to defend, he is not very ſcrupulous about what he aſſerts, nor very cautious, if the preſent purpoſe be ſerved, not to entangle himſelf in his own ſophiſtries. But when all arts are exhauſted, like other hunted animals, he ſometimes ſtands at bay; as he cannot diſown the groſſneſs of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that preſcribes morality to a comick poet.

His

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be truſted. His parallel of the verſification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very juſtly cenſured by *Sewel*. His compariſon of the firſt line of Virgil with the firſt of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he ſays, is ſoft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ ſuperimpoſito moles geminata coloſſo.

Statius perhaps heats himſelf, as he proceeds, to exaggerations ſomewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too haſty, if he had condemned him to ſtraw for one ſounding line. Dryden wanted an inſtance, and the firſt that occured was impreſt into the ſervice.

What he wiſhes to ſay, he ſays at hazard; he cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never ſeen; gives a falſe account of *Chapman's* verſification; and diſcovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he tranſlated the firſt book of the Iliad, without knowing what was in the ſecond.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Weſtminſter under the tuition of Buſby, who advanced his ſcholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-ſchools, he reſided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be ſuppoſed that his ſkill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common ſtudents; but his ſcholaſtick acquiſitions ſeem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illuſtrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and thoſe ſuch as lie in the beaten track of regular ſtudy; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of loſing himſelf in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, becauſe it is not ſufficiently intereſting and pathetick. He might have determined the queſtion upon ſurer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian

tilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the diſcuſſion of plot or ſentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than ſuch diſcuſſions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from oſtentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dreſſing it; or ſuperficial, which, by what he gives, ſhews what he wanted; or erroneous, haſtily collected, and negligently ſcattered.

Yet it cannot be ſaid that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languiſhes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and ſparkle with illuſtrations. There is ſcarcely any ſcience or faculty that does not ſupply him with occaſional images and lucky ſimilitudes; every page diſcovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full poſſeſſion of great ſtores of intel-

lectual wealth. Of him that knows much, it is natural to ſuppoſe that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various converſation, by a quick apprehenſion, a judicious ſelection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digeſtion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to paſs without notice, and a habit of reflection that ſuffered nothing uſeful to be loſt. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every underſtanding was proud to be aſſociated, and of which every one ſolicited the regard, by an ambitious diſplay of himſelf, had a more pleaſant, perhaps a nearer way, to knowledge than by the ſilent progreſs of ſolitary reading. I do not ſuppoſe that he deſpiſed books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuoſity of his genius, to more vivid and ſpeedy inſtructors; and that his ſtudies were rather deſultory and fortuitous than conſtant and ſyſtematical.

It muſt be confeſſed that he ſcarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he

tions

mentions books; and to him may be tranſferred the praiſe which he gives his maſter Charles.

His converſation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the nobleſt uſeful arts,
Were ſuch, dead authors could not give,
But habitudes of thoſe that live;
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive:
He drain'd from all, and all they knew,
His apprehenſion quick, his judgement true:
That the moſt learn'd with ſhame confeſs
His knowledge more, his reading only leſs.

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie ſcattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the queſtion worth his notice, his works muſt be peruſed with very cloſe attention.

Criticiſm, either didactick or defenſive, occupies almoſt all his proſe, except thoſe pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a ſettled ſtyle, in which the firſt half of the ſentence betrays the other. The clauſes are

never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word ſeems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay; what is great, is ſplendid. He may be thought to mention himſelf too frequently; but while he forces himſelf upon our eſteem, we cannot refuſe him to ſtand high in his own. Every thing is excuſed by the play of images and the ſpritelineſs of expreſſion. Though all is eaſy, nothing is feeble; though all ſeems careleſs, there is nothing harſh; and though, ſince his earlier works, more than a century has paſſed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obſolete.

He who writes much, will not eaſily eſcape a manner, ſuch a recurrence of particular modes as may be eaſily noted. Dryden is always *another and the ſame*, he does not exhibit a ſecond time the ſame elegancies in the ſame form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expreſſing with clearneſs what he thinks with vigour. His ſtyle could not eaſily be imitated, either ſeriouſly or ludicrouſly; for, being always equable and always

varied, it has no prominent or diſcriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from diſproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged reſemblance.

From his proſe, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and ſecondary praiſe; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of Engliſh literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the ſentiments, and tuned the numbers of Engliſh Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, ſome advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had ſhewn that long diſcourſes in rhyme grew more pleaſing when they were broken into couplets, and that verſe conſiſted not only in the number but the arrangement of ſyllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample

ample comprehenſion. More examples of more modes of compoſition were neceſſary for the eſtabliſhment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation neceſſarily divides itſelf into diction ſcholaſtick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and groſs; and from a nice diſtinction of theſe different parts, ariſes a great part of the beauty of ſtyle. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of ſelection was little known to our authors; our ſpeech lay before them in a heap of confuſion, and every man took for every purpoſe what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no ſyſtem of words at once refined from the groſſneſs of domeſtick uſe, and free from the harſhneſs of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpoſe of a poet. From thoſe ſounds which

we hear on ſmall or on coarſe occaſions, we do not eaſily receive ſtrong impreſſions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly ſtrangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themſelves which they ſhould convey to things.

Thoſe happy combinations of words which diſtinguiſh poetry from proſe, had been rarely attempted; we had few elegancies or flowers of ſpeech, the roſes had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-born the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were ſheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new verſification, as it was called, may be conſidered as owing its eſtabliſhment to Dryden; from whoſe time it is apparent that Engliſh poetry has had no tendency to relapſe to its former ſavageneſs.

The affluence and comprehenſion of our language is very illuſtriouſly diſplayed in our poetical

poetical tranſlations of Ancient Writers; a work which the French ſeem to relinquiſh in deſpair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonſon thought it neceſſary to copy Horace almoſt word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adverſary, conſiders it as indiſpenſably requiſite in a tranſlation to give line for line. It is ſaid that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the beſt verſifier of the laſt age, has ſtruggled hard to compriſe every book of his Engliſh Metamorphoſes in the ſame number of verſes with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to ſhew that he underſtood his author, with ſo little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verſes; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by underſtanding them. Cowley ſaw that ſuch *copyers* were a *ſervile race*; he aſſerted his liberty, and ſpread his wings ſo boldly that he left his authors. It was reſerved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us juſt rules and examples of tranſlation.

When

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impoſſible that the ſame modes of expreſſion ſhould always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the cloſeſt tranſlation may be conſidered as the beſt; but when they divaricate, each muſt take its natural courſe. Where correſpondence cannot be obtained, it is neceſſary to be content with ſomething equivalent. *Tranſlation therefore*, ſays Dryden, *is not ſo looſe as paraphraſe, nor ſo cloſe as metaphraſe.*

All poliſhed languages have different ſtyles; the conciſe, the diffuſe, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of ſtyle conſiſts the reſemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the tranſlator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in ſuch a dreſs of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been Engliſh: rugged magnificence is not to be ſoftened: hyperbolical oſtentation is not to be repreſſed, nor ſententious affectation to have its points blunted. A tranſlator is to be like his author: it is not his buſineſs to excel him.

The

The reaſonableneſs of theſe rules ſeems ſufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by obſerving them were ſo happy, that I know not whether they were ever oppoſed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whoſe learning was greater than his powers of poetry; and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the ſpirit of Seneca, has introduced his verſion of three tragedies by a defence of cloſe tranſlation. The authority of Horace, which the new tranſlators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reaſon wants not Horace to ſupport it.

It ſeldom happens that all the neceſſary cauſes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obſtructions. The exigencies in which Dryden was condemned to paſs his life, are reaſonably ſuppoſed to have blaſted his genius, to have driven out his works in a ſtate of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have ſupplied.

Poverty,

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is ſometimes too haſtily accuſed. If the excellence of Dryden's works was leſſened by his indigence, their number was increaſed; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written leſs he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been ſolicited by ſomething more preſſing than the love of praiſe.

But as is ſaid by his Sebaſtian,

What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We know that Dryden's ſeveral productions were ſo many ſucceſſive expedients for his ſupport; his plays were therefore often borrowed, and his poems were almoſt all occaſional.

In an occaſional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itſelf, and however ſtored with acquiſitions. He whoſe work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination

and

and his ſtudies have beſt qualified him to diſplay and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication, till he has ſatisfied his friends and himſelf; till he has reformed his firſt thoughts by ſubſequent examination; and poliſhed away thoſe faults which the precipitance of ardent compoſition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have paſſed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occaſional poet is circumſcribed by the narrowneſs of his ſubject. Whatever can happen to man has happened ſo often, that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have moſt of us been married; and ſo many have died before us, that our deaths can ſupply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the publick has an intereſt; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always conſidered as buſineſs for the Muſe. But after ſo many inauguratory gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he muſt be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who ſays any thing not ſaid before. Even

war

war and conqueſt, however ſplendid, ſuggeſt no new images; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with thoſe ornaments that have graced his predeceſſors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem muſt not be delayed till the occaſion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegancies and illuſtrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation: the compoſition muſt be diſpatched while converſation is yet buſy, and admiration freſh; and haſte is to be made, leſt ſome other event ſhould lay hold upon mankind.

Occaſional compoſitions may however ſecure to a writer the praiſe both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long ſtudy, and muſt be furniſhed immediately from the treaſures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the firſt publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick ſtanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, ſhew

a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are ſmooth, and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and eaſy.

Davenant ſeems at this time to have been his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to pleaſe his ear with the ſtanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his verſification: there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonſon's ruggedneſs; but he did not ſo ſoon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verſes on the Reſtoration, he ſays of the King's exile,

He, toſs'd by Fate—
Could taſte no ſweets of youth's deſired age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to ſhew how virtue and wiſdom are increaſed by adverſity, he makes this remark:

Well might the ancient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of *counſellor*,
Since, ſtruck with rays of proſperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.

His

His praiſe of Monk's dexterity compriſes ſuch a cluſter of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elſewhere be eaſily found:

'Twas Monk, whom Providence deſign'd to looſe
Thoſe real bonds falſe freedom did impoſe.
The bleſſed ſaints that watch'd this turning ſcene,
Did from their ſtars with joyful wonder lean,
To ſee ſmall clues draw vaſteſt weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order ſtrong.
Thus pencils can by one ſlight touch reſtore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With eaſe ſuch fond chimæras we purſue,
As fancy frames for fancy to ſubdue:
But, when ourſelves to action we betake,
It ſhuns the mint like gold that chymiſts make:
How hard was then his taſk, at once to be
What in the body natural we ſee!
Man's Architect diſtinctly did ordain
The charge of muſcles, nerves, and of the brain;
Through viewleſs conduits ſpirits to diſpenſe
The ſprings of motion from the ſeat of ſenſe.
'Twas not the haſty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wiſe delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he ſtrook,
Would let them play a-while upon the hook.

Our healthful food the ſtomach labours thus,
At firſt embracing what it ſtraight doth cruſh.
Wiſe leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till ſome ſafe criſis authorize their ſkill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper uſe of mythology. After having rewarded the heathen deities for their care,

With *Alga* who the ſacred altar ſtrows?
To all the ſea-gods Charles an offering owes;
A bull to thee, Portunus, ſhall be ſlain;
A ram to you, ye Tempeſts of the Main.

He tells us, in the language of religion,

Prayer ſtorm'd the ſkies, and raviſh'd Charles from thence,
As heaven itſelf is took by violence.

And afterwards mentions one of the moſt awful paſſages of Sacred Hiſtory.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,

For by example moſt we ſinn'd before,
And, glaſs-like, clearneſs mix'd with frailty bore.

How

How far he was yet from thinking it neceſſary to found his ſentiments on Nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles:

The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their ſtraiten'd lungs.—
It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;
The land returns, and in the white it wears
The marks of penitence and ſorrow bears.

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe ſome verſes, in which he repreſents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. "Though "this," ſaid Malherbe, "was in my time, "I do not remember it."

His poem on the *Coronation* has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deſerve to be quoted;

You have already quench'd ſedition's brand,
And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;
The jealous ſects that durſt not truſt their cauſe
So far from their own will as to the laws,

Him for their umpire, and their ſynod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæſar make.

Here may be found one particle of that old verſification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another:

Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.

In the verſes to the lord chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit ſo hopeleſs at the firſt view, that few would have attempted it; and ſo ſucceſsfully laboured, that though at laſt it gives the mind more perplexity than pleaſure, and ſeems hardly worth the ſtudy that it coſts, yet it muſt be valued as a proof of a mind at once ſubtle and comprehenſive:

In open proſpect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth ſeems join'd unto the ſky:
So in this hemiſphere our outmoſt view
Is only bounded by our king and you:
Our ſight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That, though your orbs of different greatneis be,
Yet both are for each other's uſe diſpos'd,
His to encloſe, and yours to be enclos'd.
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptineſs had come between.

The

The compariſon of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all reſemblance too far behind it:

And as the Indies were not found before
Thoſe rich perfumes which from the happy ſhore
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whoſe guilty ſweetneſs firſt their world betray'd;
So by your counſels we are brought to view
A new and undiſcover'd world in you.

There is another compariſon, for there is little elſe in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain proſaick meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obſcurity, for its magnificence:

How ſtrangely active are the arts of peace,
Whoſe reſtleſs motions leſs than wars do ceaſe:
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noiſe;
And war more force, but not more pains employs:
Such is the mighty ſwiftneſs of your mind,
That, like the earth's, it leaves our ſenſe behind,
While you ſo ſmoothly turn and rowl our ſphere,
That rapid motion does but reſt appear.
For as in nature's ſwiftneſs, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,

All ſeems at reſt to the deluded eye,
Mov'd by the ſoul of the ſame harmony:
So carry'd on by ~~our~~ unwearied care,
We reſt in peace, and yet in motion ſhare.

To this ſucceed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's firſt attempt at thoſe penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he ſeems to have been peculiarly formed:

Let envy then thoſe crimes within you ſee,
From which the happy never muſt be free;
Envy that does with miſery reſide,
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.

Into this poem he ſeems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil ſuch ſtubborn and unmalleable thoughts; but, as a ſpecimen of his abilities to unite the moſt unſociable matter, he has concluded with lines, of which I think not myſelf obliged to tell the meaning:

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
Your age but ſeems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
And meaſure change, but ſhare no part of it:
And ſtill it ſhall without a weight increaſe,
Like this new year, whoſe motions never ceaſe.

For

For ſince the glorious courſe you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the ſun,
It muſt both weightleſs and immortal prove,
Becauſe the centre of it is above.

In the *Annus Mirabilis* he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this experience of its inconvenience. This is one of his greateſt attempts. He had ſubjects equal to his abilities, a great naval war, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been deſcribed in heroick poetry; but a ſea-fight and artillery had yet ſomething of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets deſcribe them; for they borrow every thing from their predeceſſors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the firſt French writer that had ever hazarded in verſe the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are leſs afraid of novelty, had already poſſeſſion of thoſe dreadful images: Waller had deſcribed a ſea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully anſwer the expectation raiſed by ſuch ſubjects and ſuch a writer. With the ſtanza of Davenant he has ſometimes his vein of parentheſis, and incidental diſquiſition, and ſtops his narrative for a wiſe remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more ſentiment than deſcription, and does not ſo much impreſs ſcenes upon the fancy, as deduce conſequences and make compariſons.

The initial ſtanzas have rather too much reſemblance to the firſt lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps ſuch a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, *Orbem jam totum*, &c.

Of the king collecting his navy, he ſays,

It ſeems as every ſhip their ſovereign knows,
His awful ſummons they ſo ſoon obey;
So hear the ſcaly herds when Proteus blows,
And ſo to paſture follow through the ſea.

It

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two firſt lines ſeriouſly, and that ſome wag had added the two latter in burleſque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To ſee this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the ſkies;
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets riſe.

The deſcription of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very compleat ſpecimen of the deſcriptions in this poem:

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the riſing ſun:
And precious ſand from ſouthern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted caſtors, conſcious of their ſtore,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coaſt they bring:
Then firſt the North's cold boſom ſpices bore,
And winter brooded on the eaſtern ſpring.

By the rich ſcent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did cloſe in covert lie:
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The Engliſh undertake th' unequal war:
Seven ſhips alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Beſiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

Theſe fight like huſbands, but like lovers thoſe:
Theſe fain would keep, and thoſe more fain enjoy:
And to ſuch height their frantic paſſion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to deſtroy:

Amidſt whole heaps of ſpices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd againſt them fly:
Some preciouſly by ſhatter'd porcelain fall,
And ſome by aromatic ſplinters die.

And though by tempeſts of the prize bereft,
In heaven's inclemency ſome eaſe we find:
Our foes we vanquiſh'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the ſeas and wind.

In this manner is the ſublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch ſeek a ſhelter for a wealthy fleet: this ſurely needed no illuſtration; yet they muſt fly, not like all the reſt of mankind on the ſame occaſion,

caſion, but *like hunted caſtors*; and they might with ſtrict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noſes—their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Huſband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the Caſtor, are images too domeſtick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different ſenſations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the faireſt flowers of Engliſh poetry.

The night comes on, we eager to purſue
The combat ſtill, and they aſham'd to leave:
'Till the laſt ſtreaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moon-light did our rage deceive.

In th' Engliſh fleet each ſhip reſounds with joy,
And loud applauſe of their great leader's fame:
In firy dreams the Dutch they ſtill deſtroy,
And, ſlumbering, ſmile at the imagin'd flame.

Not ſo the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;
Faint ſweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vaſt bulks, which little ſouls but ill ſupply.)

In

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, ſhipwreck'd, labour to ſome diſtant ſhore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare ſleep no more.

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art ſhould be ſunk in general expreſſions, becauſe poetry is to ſpeak an univerſal language. This rule is ſtill ſtronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion that a ſea-fight ought to be deſcribed in the nautical language; *and certainly*, ſays he, *as thoſe who in a logical diſputation keep to general terms would hide a fallacy, ſo thoſe who do it in any poetical deſcription would veil their ignorance.*

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experience at laſt we learn as well what will pleaſe as what will profit. In the battle, his terms ſeem to have been blown away; but he deals them liberally in the dock:

So here ſome pick out bullets from the ſides,
Some drive old *okum* thro' each *ſeam* and rift:
Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.

With

With boiling pitch another near at hand
(From friendly Sweden brought) the *ſeams*
inſtops:
Which, well laid o'er, the ſalt-ſea waves with-
ſtand,
And ſhake them from the riſing beak in
drops.

Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* blind,
Or ſear-cloth maſts with ſtrong *tarpawling*
coats:
To try new *ſhrouds* one mounts into the wind,
And one below, their eaſe or ſtiffneſs notes.

I ſuppoſe here is not one term which every reader does not wiſh away.

His digreſſion to the original and progreſs of navigation, with his proſpect of the advancement which it ſhall receive from the Royal Society, then newly inſtituted, may be conſidered as an example ſeldom equalled of ſeaſonable excurſion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me diſcontented; he ſays, that by the help of the philoſophers,

Inſtructed ſhips ſhall ſail to quick commerce,
By which remoteſt regions are allied.—

Which

Which he is conſtrained to explain in a note, *By a more exact meaſure of longitude.* It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured ſcience into poetry, and have ſhewn, by explaining longitude, that verſe did not refuſe the ideas of philoſophy.

His deſcription of the Fire is painted by reſolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reaſon than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant diſtreſs, is one of the moſt dreadful ſpectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it ſeems to raiſe little emotion in the breaſt of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from ſtreet to ſtreet, with now a reflection, and now a ſimile, till at laſt he meets the king, for whom he makes a ſpeech, rather tedious in a time ſo buſy; and then follows again the progreſs of the fire.

There are, however, in this part ſome paſſages that deſerve attention; as in the beginning:

The diligence of trades and noiſeful gain
And luxury more late aſleep were laid;
All was the night's, and in her ſilent reign
No ſound the reſt of Nature did invade
In this deep quiet—

The expreſſion *All was the night's* is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

Omnia noctis erant placida compoſta quiete,

that he might have concluded better,

Omnia noctis erant.

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:

The ghoſts of traytors from the bridge deſcend
With bold fanatick ſpectres to rejoice;
About the fire into a dance they bend,
And ſing their ſabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which ſhall be made in the new city, is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which Poets cannot always boaſt, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a ſimile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, ſeems not yet fully to have formed his verſification, or ſettled his ſyſtem of propriety.

From this time, he addicted himſelf almoſt wholly to the ſtage, *to which*, ſays he, *my*

genius never much inclined me, merely as the moſt profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*, who had ſtudied his works with great attention, he ſettled his principles of verification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zeb*; and according to his own account of the ſhort time in which he wrote *Tyrannick Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he ſoon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactneſs.

Rhyme has been ſo long baniſhed from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the paſſions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that ſentences ſtand more independent on each other, and ſtriking paſſages are therefore eaſily ſelected and retained. Thus the deſcription of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the riſe and fall of empire in the *Conqueſt of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love*, or *Don Sebaſtian*.

To ſearch his plays for vigorous ſallies, and ſententious elegancies, or to fix the dates

of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by ſolicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not ſo wholly abſorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of tranſlation in a preface to the Engliſh Epiſtles of Ovid; one of which he tranſlated himſelf, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

Abſalom and Achitophel is a work ſo well known, that particular criticiſm is ſuperfluous. If it be conſidered as a poem political and controverſial, it will be found to compriſe all the excellencies of which the ſubject is ſuſceptible; acrimony of cenſure, elegance of praiſe, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of ſentiment, happy turns of language, and pleaſing harmony of numbers; and all theſe raiſed to ſuch a height as can ſcarcely be found in any other Engliſh compoſition.

It is not, however, without faults; ſome lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiouſly licentious. The original ſtructure of the poem was defective; allego-

ries drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The ſubject had likewiſe another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or deſcription, and a long poem of mere ſentiments eaſily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interpoſition of ſomething that ſooths the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the reſt.

As an approach to hiſtorical truth was neceſſary, the action and cataſtrophe were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleaſing diſproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many ſects various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpoſe of miſchief, formidable for their numbers, and ſtrong by their ſupports, while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are ſet forth to view; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a ſpeech, and

Henceforth a ſeries of new times began.

Who

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted caſtle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of braſs, which vaniſhes at once into air, when the deſtined knight blows his horn before it?

In the ſecond part, written by *Tate*, there is a long inſertion, which, for poignancy of ſatire, exceeds any part of the former. Perſonal reſentment, though no laudable motive to ſatire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a buſy prompter.

The *Medal*, written upon the ſame principles with *Abſalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives leſs pleaſure, though it diſcovers equal abilities in the writer. The ſuperſtructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a ſingle character or incident cannot furniſh as many ideas, as a ſeries of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, ſince time has left it to itſelf, is not much read, nor perhaps generally underſtood, yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and ſerious ſatire. The picture of a man whoſe propenſions to miſchief are

ſuch, that his beſt actions are but inability of wickedneſs, is very ſkilfully delineated and ſtrongly coloured.

Power was his aim: but, thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.
Him, in the anguiſh of his ſoul, he ſerv'd;
Rewarded faſter ſtill than he deſerv'd:
Behold him now exalted into truſt;
His counſels oft convenient, ſeldom juſt.
Ev'n in the moſt ſincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging ſtill to be a knave.
The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years,
Made him uneaſy in his lawful gears:
At leaſt as little honeſt as he cou'd:
And, like white witches, miſchievouſly good.
To this firſt bias, longingly, he leans;
And rather would be great by wicked means.

The *Threnodia*, which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls *Auguſtalis*, is not among his happieſt productions. Its firſt and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accuſtomed. What is worſe, it has neither tenderneſs nor dignity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetick. He ſeems to look round him for

images

images which he cannot find, and what he has he diſtorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. He is, he ſays, *petrified with grief*; but the marble ſometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

The ſons of art all med'cines try'd,
And every noble remedy apply'd;
With emulation each eſſay'd
His utmoſt ſkill; *nay more they pray'd:*
Was never loſing game with better conduct play'd.

He had been a little inclined to merriment before upon the prayers of a nation for their dying ſovereign, nor was he ſerious enough to keep heathen fables out of his religion.

With him th' innumberable croud of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud;
The firſt well-meaning rude petitioners,
All for his life aſſail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the ſkies by offering up their own.
So great a throng not heaven itſelf could bar;
'T was almoſt borne by force as in the giants war.
The prayers, at leaſt, for his reprieve were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the compoſition a deſire of ſplendor without wealth. In the concluſion he ſeems too much pleaſed with the proſpect of the new reign to have lamented his old maſter with much ſincerity.

He did not miſcarry in this attempt for want of ſkill either in lyrick or elegiack poetry. His poem *on the death* of Mrs. *Killigrew*, is undoubtedly the nobleſt ode that our language ever has produced. The firſt part flows with a torrent of enthuſiaſm. *Fervet immenſuſque ruit.* All the ſtanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems muſt be held together by ſome leſs valuable matter.

In his firſt ode for Cecilia's day, which is loſt in the ſplendor of the ſecond, there are paſſages which would have dignified any other poet. The firſt ſtanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapaſon* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

From

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This univerſal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Ariſe ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot, and moiſt and dry,
In order to their ſtations leap,
And muſick's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This univerſal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compaſs of the notes it ran,
The diapaſon cloſing full in man.

The concluſion is likewiſe ſtriking, but it includes an image ſo awful in itſelf, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wiſh the antitheſis of *muſick untuning* had found ſome other place.

As from the power of ſacred lays
The ſpheres began to move,
And ſung the great Creator's praiſe
To all the bleſs'd above.
So when the laſt and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant ſhall devour,
The trumpet ſhall be heard on high,
The dead ſhall live, the living die,
And muſick ſhall untune the ſky.

Of

Of his ſkill in Elegy he has given a ſpecimen in his *Eleonora*, of which the following lines diſcover their author.

Though all theſe rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow ſpace of life confin'd,
The figure was with full perfection crown'd;
Though not ſo large an orb, as truly round:
As when in glory, through the public place,
The ſpoils of conquer'd nations were to paſs,
And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
The conſul was conſtrain'd his pomp to crowd;
And ſo the ſwift proceſſion hurry'd on,
That all, though not diſtinctly, might be ſhown:
So in the ſtraiten'd bounds of life confin'd,
She gave but glimpſes of her glorious mind:
And multitudes of virtues paſs'd along;
Each preſſing foremoſt in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be ſeen, and then make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
Yet unemploy'd no minute ſlipp'd away;
Moments were precious in ſo ſhort a ſtay.
The haſte of heaven to have her was ſo great,
That ſome were ſingle acts, though each compleat;
And every act ſtood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is ſo much likeneſs in the initial compariſon, that there is no illuſtration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented.

As

As when ſome great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whiſpers, firſt, and mournful murmurs riſe
Among the ſad attendants; then the ſound
Soon gathers voice, and ſpreads the news around,
Through town and country, till the dreadful blaſt
Is blown to diſtant colonies at laſt;
Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
For his long life, and for his happy reign:
So ſlowly by degrees, unwilling fame
Did matchleſs Eleonora's fate proclaim,
Till publick as the loſs the news became.

This is little better than to ſay in praiſe of a ſhrub, that it is as green as a tree, or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confeſſes that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates; the praiſe being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impreſſion upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much deſire of imitation. Knowledge of the ſubject is to the poet, what materials are to the architect.

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almoſt the only work of Dryden which can be conſidered as a voluntary effuſion; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence

gence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the ſubject is rather argumentative than poetical: he intended only a ſpecimen of metrical diſputation.

> And this unpoliſh'd rugged verſe I choſe,
> As fitteſt for diſcourſe, and neareſt proſe.

This, however, is a compoſition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diverſified with the ſolemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perſpicuity of argument; nor will it be eaſy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though proſaick in ſome parts, riſes to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the ſkies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the ſame kind, or not far diſtant from it, is the *Hind and Panther*, the longeſt of all Dryden's original poems; an allegory, intended to comprize and to decide the controverſy between the Romaniſts and Proteſtants. The ſcheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more abſurd than that one beaſt ſhould counſel another to reſt her faith upon a pope and council? He ſeems well enough

enough ſkilled in the uſual topicks of argument, endeavours to ſhew the neceſſity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to aſk, why ſince we ſee without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, becauſe ſhe may be worried; but walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at laſt declares herſelf to be the Catholic church.

This abſurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe* of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and cenſure of the incongruity of the fiction, chiefly conſiſts the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary paſſions, ſeems to readers almoſt a century diſtant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whoſe judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the ſubject, uſed to mention this poem as the moſt correct ſpecimen of Dryden's

Dryden's verſification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be ſuppoſed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate ſcheme of metre.

We may therefore reaſonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the ſenſe to couplets, ſince he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the foreſt rang'd;
Without unſpotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for ſhe knew no ſin.
Yet had ſhe oft been chac'd with horns and hounds
And Scythian ſhafts, and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

Theſe lines are lofty, elegant, and muſical, notwithſtanding the interruption of the pauſe, of which the effect is rather increaſe of pleaſure by variety, than offence by ruggedneſs.

To the firſt part it was his intention, he ſays, *to give the majeſtick turn of heroick poeſy*; and

and perhaps he might have executed his deſign not unſucceſsfully, had not an opportunity of ſatire, which he cannot forbear, fallen ſometimes in his way. The character of a Preſbyterian, whoſe emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majeſtick.

More haughty than the reſt, the wolfiſh race
Appear with belly gaunt and famiſh'd face:
Never was ſo deform'd a beaſt of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Cloſe clapp'd for ſhame; but his rough creſt he rears,
And pricks up his predeſtinating ears.

His general character of the other ſorts of beaſts that never go to church, though ſprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poeſy.

Theſe are the chief; to number o'er the reſt,
And ſtand like Adam naming every beaſt,
Were weary work; nor will the Muſe deſcribe
A ſlimy-born, and ſun-begotten tribe;
Who, far from ſteeples and their ſacred ſound,
In fields their ſullen conventicles found.
Theſe groſs, half-animated, lumps I leave;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive;
But if they think at all, 'tis ſure no higher
Than matter, put in motion, may aſpire;

Souls

Souls that can ſcarce ferment their maſs of clay;
So droſſy, ſo diviſible are they,
As would but ſerve pure bodies for allay:
Such ſouls as ſhards produce, ſuch beetle things
As only buz to heaven with evening wings;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know not beings, and but hate a name;
To them the Hind and Panther are the ſame.

One more inſtance, and that taken from the narrative part, where ſtyle was more in his choice, will ſhow how ſteadily he kept his reſolution of heroick dignity.

For when the herd, ſuffic'd, did late repair
To ferney heaths, and to their foreſt laire,
She made a mannerly excuſe to ſtay,
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way:
That, ſince the ſky was clear, an hour of talk
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,
To chat awhile on their adventures paſt:
Nor had the grateful Hind ſo ſoon forgot
Her friend and fellow-ſufferer in the plot.
Yet, wondering how of late ſhe grew eſtrang'd,
Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd,
She thought this hour th'occaſion would preſent
To learn her ſecret cauſe of diſcontent,

Which

Which well ſhe hop'd, might be with eaſe re-
dreſs'd,
Conſidering her a well-bred civil beaſt;
And more a gentlewoman than the reſt.
After ſome common talk what rumours ran,
The lady of the ſpotted muff began.

The ſecond and third parts he profeſſes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more ſuitable to diſpute and converſation; the difference is not, however, very eaſily perceived; the firſt has familiar and the two others have ſonorous lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Cæſar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this conſtitutional abſurdity is forgiven, the poem muſt be confeſſed to be written with great ſmoothneſs of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controverſy is embelliſhed with pointed ſentences, diverſified by illuſtrations, and enlivened by ſallies of invective. Some of the facts to which alluſions are made, are now become obſcure,

and perhaps there may be many ſatirical paſſages little underſtood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a compoſition which would naturally be examined with the utmoſt acrimony of criticiſm, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention; and there are, indeed, few negligences in the ſubordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the ſubſequent unpopularity of the ſubject, added to the ridiculouſneſs of its firſt elements, has ſunk it into neglect; but it may be uſefully ſtudied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument ſuffers little from the metre.

In the poem on *the Birth of the Prince of Wales*, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and the inſenſibility of the precipice on which the king was then ſtanding, which the laureate apparently ſhared with the reſt of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controverſy, diſmiſſed him from court, and made him again a playwright and tranſlator.

Of

Of Juvenal there had been a tranſlation by Stapylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more ſmooth, and Holiday's is more eſteemed for the learning of his notes. A new verſion was propoſed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main deſign was conducted by Dryden, whoſe reputation was ſuch that no man was unwilling to ſerve the Muſes under him.

The general character of this tranſlation will be given, when it is ſaid to preſerve the wit, but to want the dignity of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and ſtatelineſs, of pointed ſentences and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band ſeemed to conſider as neceſſary to be imitated, except *Creech*, who undertook the thirteenth ſatire. It is therefore perhaps poſſible to give a better repreſentation of that great ſatiriſt, even in thoſe parts which Dryden himſelf has tranſlated, ſome paſſages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was publiſhed Perſius, tranſlated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have ſhining parts, ſeems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of theſe ſatires is an exerciſe of the ſchool. Dryden ſays that he once tranſlated it at ſchool; but not that he preſerved or publiſhed the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the moſt arduous work of its kind, a tranſlation of Virgil, for which he had ſhewn how well he was qualified by his verſion of the Poëlio, and two epiſodes, one of Niſus and Euryalus, the other of Mezentius and Lauſus.

In the compariſon of Homer and Virgil, the diſcriminative excellence of Homer is elevation

elevation and comprehenſion of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and ſplendor of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be loſt, and thoſe of Virgil difficult to be retained. The maſſy trunk of ſentiment is ſafe by its ſolidity, but the bloſſoms of elocution eaſily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, ſelects thoſe which he can beſt adorn: the tranſlator muſt, at all hazards, follow his original, and expreſs thoughts which perhaps he would not have choſen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language ſo much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the Georgick and the Eneid ſhould be much delighted with any verſion.

All theſe obſtacles Dryden ſaw, and all theſe he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation conſidered its honour as intereſted in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, and another helped him in the ſubordinate parts. The arguments of the ſeveral books were given him by Addiſon.

The hopes of the publick were not diſappointed. He produced, ſays Pope, *the moſt noble and ſpirited tranſlation that I know in any language.* It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in Engliſh, and appears to have ſatisfied his friends, and, for the moſt part, to have ſilenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages ſeem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by ſtronger reſentment than bad poetry can excite, and previouſly reſolved not to be pleaſed.

His criticiſm extends only to the Preface, Paſtorals, and Georgicks; and, as he profeſſes, to give this antagoniſt an opportunity of repriſal, he has added his own verſion of the firſt and fourth Paſtorals, and the firſt Georgick. The world has forgotten his book; but ſince his attempt has given him a place in literary hiſtory, I will preſerve a ſpecimen of his criticiſm, by inſerting his remarks on the invocation before the firſt Georgick, and of his poetry, by annexing his own verſion.

Ver. 1

Ver. 1. " *What makes a plenteous harveſt,* " *when to turn, The fruitful ſoil, and when to* " *ſow the corn*—It's *unlucky*, they ſay, *to* " *ſtumble at the threſhold*, but what has a " *plenteous harveſt* to do here? *Virgil* would " not pretend to preſcribe *rules* for *that* " which depends not on the *huſbandman's* " care, but the *diſpoſition of Heaven* altoge- " ther. Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends " ſomewhat on the *good method of tillage*, and " where the *land*'s ill manur'd, the *corn*, " without a miracle, can be but *indifferent*; " but the *harveſt* may be *good*, which is its " *propereſt* epithet, tho' the *huſbandman's* " *ſkill* were never ſo *indifferent*. The next " *ſentence* is *too literal*, and *when to plough* " had been *Virgil's* meaning, and intelligible " to every body; and *when to ſow the corn*, " is a needleſs *addition*."

Ver. 3. " *The care of ſheep, of oxen, and of* " *ſwine, And when to geld the lambs, and ſheer* " *the ſwine*, would as well have fallen under " the *cura boum, qui cultus habendo ſit pecori*, " as Mr. *D's deduction* of particulars."

Ver. 5. "*The birth and genius of the frugal*
"*bee, I ſing,* Mæcenas, *and I ſing to thee.*
"—But where did *experientia* ever ſignify
"*birth and genius?* or what ground was
"there for ſuch a *figure* in this place? How
"much more manly is Mr. *Ogylby's* verſion!

"What makes rich grounds, in what celeſtial
"ſigns,
"'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with
"vines.
"What beſt fits cattle, what with ſheep agrees,
"And ſeveral arts improving frugal bees,
"I ſing, *Mæcenas.*

"Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are
"yet much more to the purpoſe than Mr.
"*D's* ſix."

Ver. 22. "*From fields and mountains to my*
"*ſong repair.* For *patrium linquens nemus,*
"*ſaltuſque Lycæi*—Very well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24. "*Inventor* Pallas, *of the fat-*
"*tening oil, Thou founder of the plough, and*
"*ploughman's toil!* Written as if *theſe* had
"been *Pallas's invention. The ploughman's*
"*toil's* impertinent."

Ver. 25.

Ver. 25. "—*The ſhroud-like cypreſs*— "Why *ſhroud-like?* Is a *cypreſs* pull'd up "by the *roots*, which the *ſculpture* in the "*laſt Eclogue* fills *Silvanus's* hand with, ſo "very like a *ſhroud?* Or did not Mr. *D.* "think of that kind of *cypreſs* us'd often for "*ſcarves and hatbands* at funerals formerly, "or for *widow's vails*, &c. if ſo, 'twas a *deep* "*good thought.*"

Ver. 26. "—*That wear the royal honours, and increaſe the year*—What's meant by *in-* "*creaſing the year?* Did the *gods* or *goddeſſes* "add more *months*, or *days*, or *hours* to it? "Or how can *arva tueri*—ſignify to *wear* "*rural honours?* Is this to *tranſlate*, or *abuſe* "an *author?* The next *couplet* are borrow'd "from *Ogylby*, I ſuppoſe, becauſe *leſs to the* "*purpoſe* than ordinary."

Ver. 33. "*The patron of the world, and* "Rome's *peculiar guard*—*Idle*, and none of "*Virgil's*, no more than the ſenſe of the *pre-* "*cedent couplet*; ſo again, he *interpolates* "*Virgil* with that and *the round circle of the* "*year to guide powerful of bleſſings, which thou* "*ſtrew'ſt around.* A ridiculous *Latiniſm*,

" and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the " whole *period* is but one piece of *abſurdity* " and *nonſenſe*, as thoſe who lay it with the " *original* muſt find."

Ver. 42, 43. " *And* Neptune *ſhall reſign* " *the faſces of the ſea.* Was he *conſul* or *dic-* " *tator* there? *And watry virgins for thy bed* " *ſhall ſtrive.* Both abſurd *interpolations.*"

Ver. 47, 48. " *Where in the void of heaven* " *a place is free.* Ah happy *D—n*, were *that* " *place* for thee! But where is *that void?* " Or what does our *tranſlator* mean by it? " He knows what *Ovid* ſays *God* did, to pre- " vent ſuch a *void* in heaven; perhaps, this " was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more " ſenſibly."

Ver. 49. " *The ſcorpion ready to receive thy* " *laws.* No, he would not then have *gotten* " *out of his way* ſo faſt."

Ver. 56. " *The Proſerpine affects her fient* " *ſeat*—What made *her* then ſo *angry* with " *Aſcalaphus*, for preventing her return? " She was now mus'd to *Patience* under the

" *deter-*

" *determinations of Fate,* rather than *fond* of " her *reſidence.*"

Ver. 61, 2, 3. " *Pity the poet's, and the* " *ploughman's cares, Intereſt thy greatneſs in* " *our mean affairs. And uſe thyſelf betimes to* " *hear our prayers.* Which is ſuch a wretch- " ed *perverſion* of *Virgil's noble thought* as " *Vicars* would have bluſh'd at; but Mr. " *Ogylby* makes us ſome amends, by his " better lines:

" O whereſoe'er thou art, from thence incline,
" And grant aſſiſtance to my bold deſign!
" Pity with me, poor huſbandmen's affairs,
" And now, as if tranſlated, hear our prayers.

" This is *ſenſe,* and *to the purpoſe:* the other, " poor-*miſtaken ſtuff.*"

Such were the ſtrictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors; and of whom it may be reaſonably imagined, that many who favoured his deſign were aſhamed of his inſolence.

When admiration had ſubſided, the tranſlation was more coolly examined, and found like all others, to be ſometimes erroneous, and

and ſometimes licentious. Thoſe who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verſe a tranſlation of the Eneid, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never ſeen it; but that ſuch a verſion there is, or has been, perhaps ſome old catalogue informed me.

With not much better ſucceſs, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his Prelections had given him reputation, attempted another blank verſion of the Eneid; to which, notwithſtanding the ſlight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perſeverance enough to add the Eclogues and Georgicks. His book may continue its exiſtence as long as it is the clandeſtine refuge of ſchool-boys,

Since the Engliſh ear has been accuſtomed to the melliſluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more ſplendid, new attempts have been made to tranſlate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myſelf in

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an invidious compariſon by oppoſing one paſſage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offenſive without uſe.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be eſtimated, but by their general effects and ultimate reſult. It is eaſy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happineſs of expreſſion in the original, and tranſplant it by force into the verſion: but what is given to the parts, may be ſubducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the maſter, who keeps the mind in pleaſing captivity; whoſe pages are peruſed with eagerneſs, and in hope of new pleaſure are peruſed again; and whoſe concluſion is perceived with an eye of ſorrow, ſuch as the traveller caſts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination I will conſent that Dryden ſhould be tried;

of

of this, which, in oppoſition to reaſon, makes Arioſto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticiſm, continues Shakſpeare the ſovereign of the drama.

His laſt work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the firſt example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of *Boiardo* has been new-dreſſed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuveneſcence has been beſtowed by Dryden, require little criticiſm. The tale of the cock ſeems hardly worth revival; and the ſtory of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, containing an action unſuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be ſuffered to paſs without cenſure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondneſs of remote conceits ſeems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigiſmunda* may be defended by the celebrity

brity of the ſtory. *Theodore* and *Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of ſtriking deſcription. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of ſuch reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was tranſlated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

Whatever ſubjects employed his pen, he was ſtill improving our meaſures and embelliſhing our language.

In this volume are interſperſed ſome ſhort original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and ſongs, may be compriſed in Congreve's remark, that even thoſe, if he had written nothing elſe, would have entitled him to the praiſe of excellence in his kind.

One compoſition muſt however be diſtinguiſhed. The ode for *St. Cecilia's* Day, perhaps the laſt effort of his poetry, has been always conſidered as exhibiting the higheſt flight of fancy, and the exacteſt nicety of art. This is allowed to ſtand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it,

in ſome other of Dryden's works that excellence muſt be found. Compared with the Ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced perhaps ſuperiour in the whole; but without any ſingle part, equal to the firſt ſtanza of the other.

It is ſaid to have coſt Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences: ſome of the lines are without correſpondent rhymes; a defect, which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthuſiaſm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His laſt ſtanza has leſs emotion than the former; but is not leſs elegant in the diction. The concluſion is vitious; the muſick of *Timotheus*, which *raiſed a mortal to the ſkies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reaſonably be divided.

IN a general ſurvey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehenſive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compoſitions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations, was rather ſtrong reaſon than quick ſenſibility. Upon all occaſions that were preſented, he ſtudied rather than felt, and produced ſentiments not ſuch as Nature enforces, but meditation ſupplies. With the ſimple and elemental paſſions, as they ſpring ſeparate in the mind, he ſeems not much acquainted; and ſeldom deſcribes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of ſociety, and confuſed in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he ſays of love may contribute to the explanation of his character:

Love various minds does variouſly inſpire;
It ſtirs in gentle boſoms gentle fire,
Like that of incenſe on the altar laid;
But raging flames tempeſtuous ſouls invade;

A fire which every windy paſſion blows,
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle boſoms:* Love, as it ſubſiſts in itſelf, with no tendency but to the perſon loved, and wiſhing only for correſpondent kindneſs; ſuch love as ſhuts out all other intereſt; the Love of the Golden Age, was too ſoft and ſubtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with ſome other deſires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obſtructed by difficulties: when it invigorated ambition, or exaſperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick; and had ſo little ſenſibility of the power of effuſions purely natural, that he did not eſteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleaſure; and for the firſt part of his life he looked on *Otway* with contempt, though at laſt, indeed very late, he confeſſed that in his play *there* was *Nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the

the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a ſervile ſubmiſſion to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with falſe magnificence. It was neceſſary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curioſity; by reviving former thoughts, or impreſſing new: ſentences were readier at his call than images; he could more eaſily fill the ear with ſome ſplendid novelty, than awaken thoſe ideas that ſlumber in the heart.

The favourite exerciſe of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too ſoon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and neceſſity, deſtiny and contingence; theſe he diſcuſſes in the language of the ſchool with ſo much profundity, that the terms which he uſes are ſeldom underſtood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himſelf in diſputation, thoughts flowed in on either ſide: he was now no longer at a loſs; he had always argument at command; *verbaque proviſam rem*—give him matter for his verſe, and he finds without difficulty verſe for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he profeſſes himſelf not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found ſo much to ariſe from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely diſtinguiſhed and diligently purſued, as from incidents and circumſtances, artifices and ſurprizes; from jeſts of action rather than of ſentiment. What he had of humorous or paſſionate, he ſeems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiary, at leaſt as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring ſallies of ſentiment, in the irregular and excentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkneſs begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of abſurdity, and hover over the abyſs of unideal vacancy. This inclination ſometimes produced nonſenſe, which he knew; as,

'Move ſwiftly, ſun, and fly a lover's pace,
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.

Amariel flies
To guard thee from the demons of the air;
My flaming ſword above them to diſplay,
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.

And

And ſometimes it iſſued in abſurdities, of which perhaps he was not conſcious:

Then we upon our orb's laſt verge ſhall go,
And ſee the ocean leaning on the ſky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we ſhall know,
And on the lunar world ſecurely pry.

Theſe lines have no meaning; but may we not ſay, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

'Tis ſo like *ſenſe* 'twill ſerve the turn as well?

This endeavour after the grand and the new, produced many ſentiments either great or bulky, and many images either juſt or ſplendid:

I am as free as Nature firſt made man,
Ere the baſe laws of ſervitude began,
When wild in woods the noble ſavage ran.

—'Tis but becauſe the Living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new;
Let me th' experiment before you try,
I'll ſhow you firſt how eaſy 'tis to die.

—There with a foreſt of their darts he ſtrove,
And ſtood like *Capaneus* defying Jove;
With his broad ſword the boldeſt beating down,
While Fate grew pale leſt he ſhould win the town,

And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it miſtook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Poſſeſſion of your earth;
If burnt, and ſcatter'd in the air, the winds
That ſtrew my duſt diffuſe my royalty,
And ſpread me o'er your clime; for where one atom
Of mine ſhall light, know there Sebaſtian reigns.

Of theſe quotations the two firſt may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of ſuch ſelection there is no end. I will add only a few more paſſages; of which the firſt, though it may perhaps not be quite clear in proſe, is not too obſcure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble:

No, there is a neceſſity in Fate,
Why ſtill the brave bold man is fortunate;
He keeps his object ever full in ſight,
And that aſſurance holds him firm and right:
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliſs,
But right before there is no precipice;
Fear makes men look aſide, and ſo their footing miſs.

Of

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the firſt is elegant, the ſecond magnificent; whether either be juſt, let the reader judge:

What precious drops are theſe,
Which ſilently each other's track purſue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?

—Reſign your caſtle—
—Enter, brave Sir; for when you ſpeak the word,
The gates ſhall open of their own accord;
The genius of the place its Lord ſhall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

Theſe burſts of extravagance, Dryden calls the *Dalilahs* of the Theatre; and owns that many noiſy lines of Maxamin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; but *I knew*, ſays he, *that they were bad enough to pleaſe, even when I wrote them.* There is ſurely reaſon to ſuſpect that he pleaſed himſelf as well as his audience; and that theſe, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had ſometimes faults of a leſs generous and ſplendid kind. He makes, like almoſt all other poets, very frequent uſe of Mythology, and ſometimes connects religion and fable too cloſely without diſtinction.

He deſcends to diſplay his knowledge with pedantick oſtentation; as when, in tranſlating Virgil, he ſays, *tack to the larboard* —and *veer ſtarboard*; and talks, in another work, of *virtue ſpooming before the wind*. His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance;

They Nature's king through Nature's opticks view'd;
Revers'd they view'd him leſſen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reverſing a teleſcope, and unluckily reverſes the object.

He is ſometimes unexpectedly mean. When he deſcribes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to ſtop the Fire of London, what is his expreſſion?

A hollow cryſtal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipp'd above,
Of this a broad *extinguiſher* he makes,
And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry ſtrove.

When

When he deſcribes the Laſt Day, and the deciſive tribunal, he intermingles this image:

When rattling bones together fly,
From the four quarters of the ſky.

It was indeed never in his power to reſiſt the temptation of a jeſt. In his Elegy on Cromwell:

No ſooner was the Frenchman's cauſe embrac'd,
Than the *light Monſieur* the *grave Don* out-weigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the ſcale—

He had a vanity unworthy of his abilities; to ſhew, as may be ſuſpected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the uſe of French words, which had then crept into converſation; ſuch as *fraicheur* for *coolneſs*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they ſtood firſt, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

Theſe are his faults of affectation; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is

is the unevenneſs of his compoſitions, that ten lines are ſeldom found together without ſomething of which the reader is aſhamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he ſeldom ſtruggled after ſupreme excellence, but ſnatched in haſte what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himſelf contented. He did not keep preſent to his mind, an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, ſuch as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he ſhould be oppoſed. He had more muſick than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the higheſt place, he had no care to riſe by contending with himſelf; but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the eaſieſt terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought ſufficient, he did not ſtop to make better; and allowed himſelf to leave many parts unfiniſhed, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he diſmiſſed from his thoughts;

thoughts; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The haſtineſs of his productions might be the effect of neceſſity; but his ſubſequent neglect could hardly have any other cauſe than impatience of ſtudy.

What can be ſaid of his verſification, will be little more than a dilatation of the praiſe given it by Pope.

> Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verſe, the full-reſounding line,
> The long majeſtick march, and energy divine.

Some improvements had been already made in Engliſh numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verſe that was ſmooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had ſometimes a finiſhed line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuſe the flowing and the ſonorous words; to vary the pauſes, and adjuſt the accents; to diverſify the cadence, and yet preſerve the ſmoothneſs of his metre.

Of

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the uſe, he eſtabliſhed it. The triplet has long ſubſiſted among us. Dryden ſeems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary, and in Hall's Satires, publiſhed five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, firſt uſed by Spenſer, for the ſake of cloſing his ſtanza with a fuller ſound. We had a longer meaſure of fourteen ſyllables, into which the Eneid was tranſlated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the laſt.

The two firſt lines of *Phaer's* third Eneid will exemplify this meaſure;

Wher Aſia's ſtate was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom ſtout,
All giltleſs, by the power of gods above was rooted out.

As theſe lines had their break, or *ceſura*, always at the eighth ſyllable, it was thought,

in time, commodious to divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately, conſiſting of eight and ſix ſyllables, make the moſt ſoft and pleaſing of our lyrick meaſures; as,

Relentleſs Time, deſtroying power,
Which ſtone and braſs obey,
Who giv'ſt to every flying hour
To work ſome new decay.

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, ſome poems, as *Drayton's Polyolbion*, were wholly written; and ſometimes the meaſures of twelve and fourteen ſyllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the firſt that inſerted the Alexandrine at pleaſure among the heroick lines of ten ſyllables, and from him Dryden profeſſes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not univerſally approved. *Swift* always cenſured them, and wrote ſome lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be conſidered that the eſſence of verſe is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verſe, is to diſpoſe ſyllables and ſounds harmonically by ſome known and ſettled rule; a rule

rule however lax enough to ſubſtitute ſimilitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without diſappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and ſpondees differently combined; the Engliſh heroick admits of acute or grave ſyllables variouſly diſpoſed. The Latin never deviates into ſeven feet, or exceeds the number of ſeventeen ſyllables; but the Engliſh Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and ſurpriſes the reader with two ſyllables more than he expected.

The effect of the Triplet is the ſame: the ear has been accuſtomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a ſudden ſurpriſed with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margins. Surely there is ſomething unſkilful in the neceſſity of ſuch mechanical direction.

Conſidering the metrical art ſimply as a ſcience, and conſequently excluding all caſualty, we muſt allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inſerted by caprice, are interruptions

ruptions of that conſtancy to which ſcience aſpires. And though the variety which they produce may very juſtly be deſired, yet to make our poetry exact, there ought to be ſome ſtated mode of admitting them.

But till ſome ſuch regulation can be formed, I wiſh them ſtill to be retained in their preſent ſtate. They are ſometimes grateful to the reader, and ſometimes convenient to the poet. *Fenton* was of opinion that Dryden was too liberal and Pope too ſparing in their uſe.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly juſt, and he valued himſelf for his readineſs in finding them; but he is ſometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the ſecond line with a weak or grave ſyllable:

Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*.

Dryden ſometimes puts the weak rhyme in the firſt:

Laugh

Laugh all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the firſt line of a couplet, which, though the French ſeem to do it without irregularity, always diſpleaſes in Engliſh poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the ſixth ſyllable; a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden ſometimes neglected:

And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.

Of Dryden's works it was ſaid by Pope, that *he could ſelect from them better ſpecimens of every mode of poetry than any other Engliſh writer could ſupply*. Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with ſuch variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctneſs of our

our ſentiments. By him we were taught *ſapere & fari*, to think naturally and expreſs forcibly. He taught us, that it was poſſible to reaſon in rhyme. He ſhewed us the true bounds of a tranſlator's liberty. What was ſaid of Rome, adorned by Auguſtus, may be applied by an eaſy metaphor to Engliſh poetry embelliſhed by Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*, he found it brick, and he left it marble.

THE invocation before the Georgicks is here inſerted from Mr. Milbourne's verſion, that, according to his own propoſal, his verſes may be compared with thoſe which he cenſures.

What makes the richeſt *tilth*, beneath what ſigns
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;
What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,
And all the management of frugal *bees*,
I ſing, *Mæcenas!* Ye immenſely clear,
Vaſt orbs of light which guide the rolling year;
Bacchus, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
We fat'ning *corn* for hungry *maſt* purſue,
If, taught by you, we firſt the *cluſter* preſt,
And *thin cold ſtreams* with *ſpritely juice* refreſht.
Ye *fawns* the preſent *numens* of the field.
Wood nymphs and *fawns*, your kind aſſiſtance yield,
Your gifts I ſing! and thou, at whoſe fear'd ſtroke
From rending earth the fiery *courſer* broke,
Great *Neptune*, O aſſiſt my artful ſong!
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong
Whoſe ſnowy heifers on her flow'ry plains
In mighty herds the *Cæan Iſle* maintains!
Pan, happy ſhepherd, if thy cares divine,
E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline;
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
And with thy lucky ſmiles our work approve

Be *Pallas* too, ſweet oil's inventor, kind;
And he, who firſt the crooked *plough* deſign'd!
Sylvanus, god of all the woods appear,
Whoſe hands a new-drawn tender *cypreſs* bear!
Ye *gods* and *goddeſſes* who e'er with love,
Would guard our paſtures, and our fields improve!
You, who new plants from unſown lands ſupply;
And with condenſing clouds obſcure the ſky,
And drop 'em ſoftly thence in fruitful ſhowers,
Aſſiſt my enterprize, ye gentler powers!

And thou, great *Cæſar!* though we know not yet
Among what gods thou'lt fix thy lofty ſeat,
Whether thou'lt be the kind *tutelar god*
Of thy own *Rome*; or with thy awful nod,
Guide the vaſt world, while thy great hand ſhall bear
The fruits and ſeaſons of the turning year,
And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear:
Whether thou'lt all the boundleſs ocean ſway,
And ſea-men only to thyſelf ſhall pray,
Thule! the fartheſt iſland, kneel to thee,
And, that thou may'ſt her ſon by marriage be,
Tethys will for the happy purchaſe yield
To make a dowry of her watry field;
Whether thou'lt add to heaven a *brighter ſign*,
And o'er the *ſummer months* ſerenely ſhine;

Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
There yet remains a ſpacious *room* for thee.
Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arms declines,
And more to thee than half his *arch* reſigns;
Whate'er thou'lt be; for ſure the realms below
No juſt pretence to thy command can ſhow:
No ſuch ambition ſways thy vaſt deſires,
Though *Greece* her own *Elyſian fields* admires.
And now, at laſt, contented *Proſerpine*
Can all her mother's earneſt prayers decline.
Whate'er thou'lt be, O guide our gentle courſe,
And with thy ſmiles our bold attempts enforce;
With me th'unknowing *ruſtics'* wants relieve,
And, though on earth, our ſacred vows receive!

MR.

MR. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his *Remarks on the Tragedies of the laſt Age*, wrote obſervations on the blank leaves; which, having been in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the publick, that no particle of Dryden may be loſt.

"That we may the leſs wonder why pity "and terror are not now the only ſprings on "which our tragedies move, and that Shak-"ſpeare may be more excuſed, Rapin con-"feſſes that the French tragedies now all "run on the *tendre*; and gives the reaſon, "becauſe love is the paſſion which moſt "predominates in our ſouls, and that there-"fore the paſſions repreſented become inſi-"pid, unleſs they are conformable to the "thoughts of the audience. But it is to be "concluded that this paſſion works not now "amongſt the French ſo ſtrongly as the other "two did amongſt the ancients. Amongſt "us, who have a ſtronger genius for writing, "the operations from the writing are much "ſtronger: for the raiſing of Shakſpeare's "paſſions is more from the excellency of "the words and thoughts, than the juſtneſs

" of the occaſion; and if he has been able " to pick ſingle occaſions, he has never " founded the whole reaſonably: yet, by the " genius of poetry in writing, he has ſuc- " ceeded.

" Rapin attributes more to the *diction*, that " is, to the words and diſcourſe of a tragedy, " than Ariſtotle has done, who places them " in the laſt rank of beauties; perhaps, only " laſt in order, becauſe they are the laſt " product of the deſign, of the diſpoſition or " connection of its parts; of the characters, " of the manners of thoſe characters, and of " the thoughts proceeding from thoſe man- " ners. Rapin's words are remarkable: 'Tis " not the admirable intrigue, the ſurpriſing " events, and extraordinary incidents, that " make the beauty of a tragedy; 'tis the " diſcourſes, when they are natural and paſ- " ſionate: ſo are Shakſpeare's.

" The parts of a poem, tragick or hero- " ick, are,

" 1. The fable itſelf.

" 2. The order or manner of its contri- " vance, in relation of the parts to the whole.

" 3. The

"3. The manners, or decency of the cha-
"racters, in ſpeaking or acting what is proper
"for them, and proper to be ſhewn by the
"poet.

"4. The thoughts which expreſs the
"manners.

"5. The words which expreſs thoſe
"thoughts.

"In the laſt of theſe, Homer excels Vir-
"gil; Virgil all other ancient poets; and
"Shakſpeare all modern poets.

"For the ſecond of theſe, the order: the
"meaning is, that a fable ought to have a
"beginning, middle, and an end, all juſt
"and natural: ſo that that part, *e. g.* which
"is the middle, could not naturally be the
"beginning or end, and ſo of the reſt: all
"depend on one another, like the links of a
"curious chain. If terror and pity are only
"to be raiſed, certainly this author follows
"Ariſtotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euri-
"pides's example: but joy may be raiſed
"too, and that doubly; either by ſeeing a
"wicked man puniſhed, or a good man at

" laſt fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to
" ſee wickedneſs proſperous and goodneſs
" depreſſed: both theſe may be profitable
" to the end of tragedy, reformation of man-
" ners; but the laſt improperly, only as it
" begets pity in the audience: though Ari-
" ſtotle, I confeſs, places tragedies of this
" kind in the ſecond form.

" He who undertakes to anſwer this ex-
" cellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf
" of our Engliſh poets againſt the Greek,
" ought to do it in this manner. Either by
" yielding to him the greateſt part of what
" he contends for, which conſiſts in this,
" that the μύθος, *i. e.* the deſign and conduct
" of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to
" thoſe ends of tragedy, which Ariſtotle and
" he propoſe, namely, to cauſe terror and
" pity; yet the granting this does not ſet
" the Greeks above the Engliſh poets.

" But the anſwerer ought to prove two
" things: firſt, that the fable is not the
" greateſt maſter-piece of a tragedy, though
" it be the foundation of it.

" Secondly,

"Secondly, That other ends as ſuitable to "the nature of tragedy may be found in the "Engliſh, which were not in the Greek.

"Ariſtotle places the fable firſt; not *quoad* "*dignitatem, ſed quoad fundamentum:* for a "fable, never ſo movingly contrived to thoſe "ends of his, pity and terror, will operate "nothing on our affections, except the cha-"racters, manners, thoughts, and words are "ſuitable.

"So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to "prove, that in all thoſe, or the greateſt "part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles "and Euripides: and this he has offered at, "in ſome meaſure; but, I think, a little "partially to the ancients.

"For the fable itſelf; 'tis in the Engliſh "more adorned with epiſodes, and larger "than in the Greek poets; conſequently "more diverting. For, if the action be but "one and that plain, without any counter-"turn of deſign or epiſode, *i. e.* under-plot, "how can it be ſo pleaſing as the Engliſh,

"which

" which have both under-plot and a turned
" deſign, which keeps the audience in expec-
" tation of the cataſtrophe? whereas in the
" Greek poets we ſee through the whole de-
" ſign at firſt.

" For the characters, they are neither ſo
" many nor ſo various in Sophocles and Eu-
" ripides, as in Shakſpeare and Fletcher;
" only they are more adapted to thoſe ends
" of tragedy which Ariſtotle commends to
" us, pity and terror.

" The manners flow from the characters,
" and conſequently muſt partake of their ad-
" vantages and diſadvantages.

" The thoughts and words, which are the
" fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are
" certainly more noble and more poetical in
" the Engliſh than in the Greek, which
" muſt be proved by comparing them, ſome-
" what more equitably than Mr. Rymer has
" done.

" After all, we need not yield that the
" Engliſh way is leſs conducing to move pity
" and

" and terror, becauſe they often ſhew virtue " oppreſſed and vice puniſhed: where they " do not both, or either, they are not to be " defended.

" And if we ſhould grant that the Greeks " performed this better, perhaps it may ad- " mit of diſpute, whether pity and terror are " either the prime, or at leaſt the only ends " of tragedy.

" 'Tis not enough that Ariſtotle has ſaid " ſo; for Ariſtotle drew his models of tra- " gedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and, " if he had ſeen ours, might have changed " his mind. And chiefly we have to ſay " (what I hinted on pity and terror, in the " laſt paragraph ſave one), that the puniſh- " ment of vice and reward of virtue are the " moſt adequate ends of tragedy, becauſe moſt " conducing to good example of life. Now " pity is not ſo eaſily raiſed for a criminal, " and the ancient tragedy always repreſents " its chief perſon ſuch, as it is for an in- " nocent man; and the ſuffering of inno- " cence and puniſhment of the offender is " of the nature of Engliſh tragedy: contra- " rily,

" lily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy " often, and the offender eſcapes. Then we " are not touched with the ſufferings of any " ſort of men ſo much as of lovers; and " this was almoſt unknown to the ancients: " ſo that they neither adminiſtered poetical " juſtice, of which Mr. Rymer boaſts, ſo " well as we; neither knew they the beſt " common place of pity, which is love.

" He therefore unjuſtly blames us for not " building on what the ancients left us; for " it ſeems, upon conſideration of the pre- " miſes, that we have wholly finiſhed what " they began.

" My judgement on this piece is this, that " it is extremely learned; but that the au- " thor of it is better read in the Greek than " in the Engliſh poets: that all writers " ought to ſtudy this critique, as the beſt " account I have ever ſeen of the ancients: " that the model of tragedy he has here given, " is excellent, and extreme correct; but " that it is not the only model of all tragedy, " becauſe it is too much circumſcribed in " plot, characters, &c, and laſtly, that we " may

" may be taught here juſtly to admire and
" imitate the ancients, without giving them
" the preference with this author, in preju-
" dice to our own country.

" Want of method in this excellent trea-
" tiſe, makes the thoughts of the author
" ſometimes obſcure.

" His meaning, that pity and terror are to
" be moved, is, that they are to be moved as
" the means conducing to the ends of tra-
" gedy, which are pleaſure and inſtruction.

" And theſe two ends may be thus diſtin-
" guiſhed. The chief end of the poet is to
" pleaſe; for his immediate reputation de-
" pends on it.

" The great end of the poem is to inſtruct,
" which is performed by making pleaſure the
" vehicle of that inſtruction; for poeſy is
" an art, and all arts are made to profit.
" *Rapin.*

" The pity, which the poet is to labour
" for, is for the criminal, not for thoſe on

" him whom he has murdered, or who have
" been the occaſion of the tragedy. The
" terror is likewiſe in the puniſhment of the
" ſame criminal; who, if he be repreſented
" too great an offender, will not be pitied:
" if altogether innocent, his puniſhment will
" be unjuſt.

" Another obſcurity is, where he ſays So-
" phocles perfected tragedy by introducing
" the third actor; that is, he meant, three
" kinds of action; one company ſinging, or
" another playing on the muſick; a third
" dancing.

" To make a true judgement in this com-
" petition betwixt the Greek poets and the
" Engliſh, in tragedy:

" Conſider, firſt, how Ariſtotle has de-
" fined a tragedy. Secondly, what he aſſigns
" the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he
" thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the
" means to attain the end propoſed.

" Compare the Greek and Engliſh tragick
" poets juſtly, and without partiality, ac-
" cording to thoſe rules.

" Then

"Then ſecondly, conſider whether Ari-
"ſtotle has made a juſt definition of tragedy;
"of its parts, of its ends, and of its beau-
"ties; and whether he, having not ſeen any
"others but thoſe of Sophocles, Euripides,
"&c. had or truly could determine what all
"the excellences of tragedy are, and where-
"in they conſiſt.

"Next ſhew in what ancient tragedy was
"deficient: for example, in the narrowneſs
"of its plots, and fewneſs of perſons, and
"try whether that be not a fault in the
"Greek poets; and whether their excel-
"lency was ſo great, when the variety was
"viſibly ſo little; or whether what they
"did was not very eaſy to do.

"Then make a judgement on what the
"Engliſh have added to their beauties: as,
"for example, not only more plot, but alſo
"new paſſions; as, namely, that of love,
"ſcarce touched on by the ancients, except
"in this one example of Phædra, cited by
"Mr. Rymer; and in that how ſhort they
"were of Fletcher!

"Prove alſo that love, being an heroick "paſſion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be "denied, becauſe of the example alledged of "Phædra; and how far Shakſpeare has out-"done them in friendſhip, &c.

"To return to the beginning of this en-"quiry; conſider if pity and terror be "enough for tragedy to move: and I be-"lieve, upon a true definition of tragedy, it "will be found that its work extends far-"ther, and that it is to reform manners, by "a delightful repreſentation of human life "in great perſons, by way of dialogue. If "this be true, then not only pity and terror "are to be moved, as the only means to bring "us to virtue, but generally love to virtue "and hatred to vice; by ſhewing the re-"wards of one, and puniſhments of the "other; at leaſt, by rendering virtue always "amiable, tho' it be ſhewn unfortunate; "and vice deteſtable, tho' it be ſhewn tri-"umphant.

"If, then, the encouragement of virtue "and diſcouragement of vice be the proper "ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and teror,

"though

" though good means, are not the only. For " all the paſſions, in their turns, are to be " ſet in a ferment: as joy, anger, love, fear, " are to be uſed as the poet's common- " places; and a general concernment for the " principal actors is to be raiſed, by making " them appear ſuch in their characters, their " words, and actions, as will intereſt the " audience in their fortunes.

" And if, after all, in a larger ſenſe, pity " comprehends this concernment for the " good, and terror includes deteſtation for the " bad, then let us conſider whether the Engliſh " have not anſwered this end of tragedy, as " well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

" And here Mr. Rymer's objections againſt " theſe plays are to be impartially weighed, " that we may ſee whether they are of " weight enough to turn the balance againſt " our countrymen.

" 'Tis evident thoſe plays, which he ar- " raigns, have moved both thoſe paſſions in " a high degree upon the ſtage.

" To give the glory of this away from the " poet, and to place it upon the actors, ſeems " unjuſt.

" One reaſon is, becauſe whatever actors " they have found, the event has been the " ſame; that is, the ſame paſſions have been " always moved: which ſhews, that there is " ſomething of force and merit in the plays " themſelves, conducing to the deſign of " raiſing theſe two paſſions: and ſuppoſe them " ever to have been excellently acted, yet " action only adds grace, vigour, and more " life, upon the ſtage; but cannot give it " wholly where it is not firſt. But ſecond- " ly, I dare appeal to thoſe who have never " ſeen them acted, if they have not found " theſe two paſſions moved within them: " and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. " Rymer's prejudice will take off his ſingle " teſtimony.

" This, being matter of fact, is reaſonably " to be eſtabliſhed by this appeal; as if one " man ſays 'tis night, the reſt of the world " conclude it to be day; there needs no far- " ther argument againſt him, that it is ſo.

" If he urge, that the general taſte is de-
" praved, his arguments to prove this can at
" beſt but evince that our poets took not the
" beſt way to raiſe thoſe paſſions; but experi-
" ence proves againſt him, that theſe means,
" which they have uſed, have been ſucceſs-
" ful, and have produced them.

" And one reaſon of that ſucceſs is, in my
" opinion, this, that Shakſpeare and Fletcher
" have written to the genius of the age and
" nation in which they lived; for though
" nature, as he objects, is the ſame in all
" places, and reaſon too the ſame; yet the
" climate, the age, the diſpoſition of the
" people, to whom a poet writes, may be ſo
" different, that what pleaſed the Greeks
" would not ſatisfy an Engliſh audience.

" And if they proceeded upon a founda-
" tion of truer reaſon to pleaſe the Atheni-
" ans than Shakſpeare and Fletcher to pleaſe
" the Engliſh, it only ſhews that the Athe-
" nians were a more judicious people; but
" the poet's buſineſs is certainly to pleaſe
" the audience.

"Whether our Engliſh audience have "been pleaſed hitherto with acorns, as "he calls it, or with bread, is the next "queſtion; that is, whether the means "which Shakſpeare and Fletcher have uſed "in their plays to raiſe thoſe paſſions before "named, be better applied to the ends by "the Greek poets than by them. And per-"haps we ſhall not grant him this wholly: "let it be granted that a writer is not to "run down with the ſtream, or to pleaſe "the people by their own uſual methods, "but rather to reform their judgements, it "ſtill remains to prove that our theatre needs "this total reformation.

"The faults, which he has found in their "deſigns, are rather wittily aggravated in "many places than reaſonably urged; and "as much may be returned on the Greeks, "by one who were as witty as himſelf.

"2. They deſtroy not, if they are granted, "the foundation of the fabrick; only take "away from the beauty of the ſymmetry: "for example, the faults in the character of "the King and No-king are not as he makes "them,

" them, ſuch as render him deteſtable, but " only imperfections which accompany hu- " man nature, and are for the moſt part ex- " cuſed by the violence of his love; ſo " that they deſtroy not our pity or con- " cernment for him: this anſwer may be " applied to moſt of his objections of that " kind.

" And Rollo committing many murders, " when he is anſwerable but for one, is too " ſeverely arraigned by him; for it adds to " our horror and deteſtation of the crimi- " nal: and poetick juſtice is not neglected " neither; for we ſtab him in our minds " for every offence which he commits; and " the point, which the poet is to gain on the " audience, is not ſo much in the death " of an offender as the raiſing an horror of " his crimes.

" That the criminal ſhould neither be wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, but ſo participating of both as to move both pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be obſerved; for that were to make all tragedies too much

" alike, which objection he foreſaw, but has
" not fully anſwered.

" To conclude, therefore; if the plays
" of the ancients are more correctly plotted,
" ours are more beautifully written. And
" if we can raiſe paſſions as high on worſe
" foundations, it ſhews our genius in tra-
" gedy is greater; for, in all other parts of
" it, the Engliſh have manifeſtly excelled
" them."

THE

THE original of the following letter is preſerved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyſe.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Eſq; to his ſons in Italy, from a MS in the Lambeth Library, marked N°. 933. p. 56.

(*Superſcribed*)

Al Illuſtriſſimo Sig^re
Carlo Dryden Camariere
d'Honore A. S. S.
In Roma.

Franca per Mantoua.

" Sept. the 3d, our ſtyle.

" Dear Sons,

Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at large, becauſe I find myſelf ſomewhat indiſpoſed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worſe than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your ſtyle, that you are both in health; but

" wonder you ſhould think me ſo negligent
" as to forget to give you an account of the
" ſhip in which your parcel is to come. I
" have written to you two or three letters
" concerning it, which I have ſent by ſafe
" hands, as I told you, and doubt not but
" you have them before this can arrive to
" you. Being out of town, I have forgotten
" the ſhip's name, which your mother will
" enquire, and put it into her letter, which
" is joined with mine. But the maſter's
" name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph
" Thorp; the ſhip is bound to Leghorn, con-
" ſigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball,
" merchants. I am of your opinion, that by
" Tonſon's means almoſt all our letters have
" miſcarried for this laſt year. But, however,
" he has miſſed of his deſign in the Dedica-
" tion, though he had prepared the book for
" it; for in every figure of Eneas he has cauſed
" him to be drawn like King William, with
" a hooked noſe. After my return to town
" I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert
" Howard's, written long ſince, and lately
" put by him into my hands: 'tis called
" *The Conqueſt of China by the Tartars.* It
" will

"will coſt me ſix weeks ſtudy, with the "probable benefit of an hundred pounds. "In the mean time I am writing a ſong for "St. Cecilia's Feaſt, who, you know, is the "patroneſs of muſick. This is trouble-"ſome, and no way beneficial; but I could "not deny the Stewards of the Feaſt, who "came in a body to me to deſire that kind-"neſs, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, "whoſe parents are your mother's friends. "I hope to ſend you thirty guineas between "Michaelmaſs and Chriſtmaſs, of which I "will give you an account when I come to "town. I remember the counſel you give "me in your letter; but diſſembling, though "lawful in ſome caſes, is not my talent; "yet, for your ſake, I will ſtruggle with the "plain openneſs of my nature, and keep in "my juſt reſentments againſt that degenerate "order. In the mean time, I flatter not my-"ſelf with any manner of hopes, but do my "duty, and ſuffer for God's ſake; being aſ-"ſured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, "though the times ſhould alter. Towards "the latter end of this month, September, "Charles will begin to recover his perfect "health, according to his nativity, which,

" caſting it myſelf, I am ſure is true, and " all things hitherto have happened accord- " ingly to the very time that I predicted " them: I hope at the ſame time to recover " more health, according to my age. Re- " member me to poor Harry, whoſe prayers " I earneſtly deſire. My Virgil ſucceeds " in the world beyond its deſert or my ex- " pectation. You know the profits might " have been more; but neither my con- " ſcience nor my honour would ſuffer me to " take them: but I never can repent of my " conſtancy, ſince I am thoroughly per- " ſuaded of the juſtice of the cauſe for " which I ſuffer. It has pleaſed God to " raiſe up many friends to me amongſt my " enemies, though they who ought to have " been my friends are negligent of me. I " am called to dinner, and cannot go on " with this letter, which I deſire you to ex- " cuſe; and am

" Your moſt affectionate ....,

" JOHN DRYDEN."

SMITH.

S M I T H.

SMITH.

EDMUND SMITH is one of thoſe lucky writers who have, without much labour, attained high reputation, and who are mentioned with reverence rather for the poſſeſſion than the exertion of uncommon abilities.

Of his life little is known; and that little claims no praiſe but what can be given to intellectual excellence, ſeldom employed to any virtuous purpoſe. His character, as given by Mr. Oldiſworth, with all the partiality of friendſhip, which is ſaid by Dr. Burton to ſhow *what fine things one man of parts*

[illegible] ſay of another; and which, however, compriſes great part of what can be known of Mr. Smith, it is better to tranſcribe at once, than to take by pieces. I ſhall ſubjoin ſuch little memorials as accident has enabled me to collect.

Mr. EDMUND SMITH was the only ſon of an eminent merchant, one Mr. Neale, by a daughter of the famous baron Lechmere. Some misfortunes of his father, which were ſoon after followed by his death, were the occaſion of the ſon's being left very young in the hands of a near relation (one who married Mr. Neale's ſiſter) whoſe name was Smith.

This gentleman and his lady treated him as their own child, and put him to Weſtminſter ſchool under the care of Dr. Buſby; whence after the loſs of his faithful and generous guardian (whoſe name he aſſumed and retained) he was removed to Chriſt-church in Oxford, and there by his aunt handſomely

handſomely maintained till her death; after which he continued a member of that learned and ingenious ſociety, till within five years of his own; though, ſome time before his leaving Chriſt-church, he was ſent for by his mother to Worceſter, and owned and acknowledged as her legitimate ſon; which had not been mentioned, but to wipe off the aſperſions that were ignorantly caſt by ſome on his birth. It is to be remembered for our author's honour, that, when at Weſtminſter election he ſtood a candidate for one of the univerſities, he ſo ſignally diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his conſpicuous performances, that there aroſe no ſmall contention between the repreſentative electors of Trinity-college in Cambridge and Chriſt-church in Oxon, which of thoſe two royal ſocieties ſhould adopt him as their own. But the electors of Trinity-college having the preference of choice that year, they reſolutely elected him; who yet, being invited at the ſame time to Chriſt-church, choſe to accept of a ſtudentſhip there. Mr. Smith's perfections, as well natural as acquired, ſeem to have been formed upon Horace's plan; who ſays in his Art of Poetry,

Ega

—Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid proſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, & conjurat amice.

He was endowed by Nature with all thoſe excellent and neceſſary qualifications which are previous to the accompliſhment of a great man. His memory was large and tenacious, yet, by a *curious felicity chiefly* ſuſceptible of the fineſt impreſſions, it received from the beſt authors he read, which it always preſerved in their primitive ſtrength and amiable order.

He had a quickneſs of apprehenſion, and vivacity of underſtanding, which eaſily took in and ſurmounted the moſt ſubtle and knotty parts of mathematicks and metaphyſicks. His wit was prompt and flowing, yet ſolid and piercing; his taſte delicate, his head clear, and his way of expreſſing his thoughts perſpicuous and engaging. I ſhall ſay nothing of his perſon, which yet was ſo well *turned*, that no neglect of himſelf in his dreſs could render it diſagreeable; inſomuch that the fair ſex, who obſerved and eſteemed him, at once commended and reproved him by the name

name of the *handſome* ſloven. An eager but generous and noble emulation grew up with him; which (as it were a rational ſort of inſtinct) puſhed him upon ſtriving to excel in every art and ſcience that could make him a credit to his college, and that college the ornament of the moſt learned and polite univerſity; and it was his happineſs to have ſeveral contemporaries and fellow-ſtudents, who exerciſed and excited this virtue in themſelves and others, thereby becoming ſo deſervedly in favour with this age, and ſo good a proof of its nice diſcernment. His judgement, naturally good, ſoon ripened into an exquiſite fineneſs and diſtinguiſhing ſagacity, which as it was active and buſy, ſo it was vigorous and manly, keeping even paces with a rich and ſtrong imagination, always upon the wing, and never tired with aſpiring. Hence it was, that, though he writ as young as Cowley, he had no puerilities; and his earlieſt productions were ſo far from having any thing in them mean and [illegible]ding, that, like the junior compoſitions of Mr. Stepney, they may make grey authors bluſh. There are many of his firſt eſſays in oratory, in epigram, elegy, and epique, ſtill handled

about the univerſity in manuſcript, which ſhew a maſterly hand; and, though maimed and injured by frequent tranſcribing, make their way into our moſt celebrated miſcellanies, where they ſhine with uncommon luſtre. Beſides thoſe verſes in the Oxford books, which he could not help ſetting his name to, ſeveral of his compoſitions came abroad under other names, which his own ſingular modeſty, and faithful ſilence, ſtrove in vain to conceal. The Encœnia and publick Collections of the Univerſity upon State Subjects, were never in ſuch eſteem, either for elegy or congratulation, as when he contributed moſt largely to them; and it was natural for thoſe who knew his peculiar way of writing, to turn to his ſhare in the work, as by far the moſt reliſhing part of the entertainment. As his parts were extraordinary, ſo he well knew how to improve them; and not only to poliſh the diamond, but enchaſe it in the moſt ſolid and durable metal. Though he was an academick the greateſt part of his life, yet he contracted no ſourneſs of temper, no ſpice of pedantry, no itch of diſputation, or obſtinate contention for the old or new philoſophy, no aſſuming way of dictating to others;

others; which are faults (though excuſable) which ſome are inſenſibly led into, who are conſtrained to dwell long within the walls of a private college. His converſation was pleaſant and inſtructive; and what Horace ſaid of Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, might juſtly be applied to him:

Nil ego contulerim jucundo ſanus Amico.
Sat. v. l. 1.

As correct a writer as he was in his moſt elaborate pieces, he read the works of others with candor, and reſerved his greateſt ſeverity for his own compoſitions; being readier to cheriſh and advance, than damp or depreſs a riſing genius, and as patient of being excelled himſelf (if any could excel him) as induſtrious to excel others.

'Twere to be wiſhed he had confined himſelf to a particular profeſſion, who was capable of ſurpaſſing in any; but in this, his want of application was in a great meaſure owing to his want of due encouragement.

He paſſed through the exerciſes of the college and univerſity with unuſual applauſe;

and though he often ſuffered his friends to call him off from his retirements, and to lengthen out thoſe jovial avocations, yet his return to his ſtudies was ſo much the more paſſionate, and his intention upon thoſe refined pleaſures of reading and thinking ſo vehement (to which his facetious and unbended intervals bore no proportion) that the habit grew upon him, and the ſeries of meditation and reflection being kept up whole weeks together, he could better ſort his ideas, and take in the ſundry parts of a ſcience at one view, without interruption or confuſion. Some indeed of his acquaintance, who were pleaſed to diſtinguiſh between the wit and the ſcholar, extolled him altogether on the account of the firſt of theſe titles; but others, who knew him better, could not forbear doing him juſtice as a prodigy in both kinds. He had ſignalized himſelf in the ſchools, as a philoſopher and polemick of extenſive knowledge and deep penetration; and went through all the courſes with a wiſe regard to the dignity and importance of each ſcience. I remember him in the Divinity-ſchool reſponding and diſputing with a perſpicuous energy, a ready exactneſs, and commanding force

force of argument, when Dr. Jane worthily preſided in the chair; whoſe condeſcending and diſintereſted commendation of him, gave him ſuch a reputation as ſilenced the envious malice of his enemies, who durſt not contradict the approbation of ſo profound a maſter in theology. None of thoſe ſelf-ſufficient creatures, who have either trifled with philoſophy, by attempting to ridicule it, or have encumbered it with novel terms, and burdenſome explanations, underſtood its real weight and purity half ſo well as Mr. Smith. He was too diſcerning to allow of the character of unprofitable, rugged, and abſtruſe, which ſome ſuperficial ſcioliſts (ſo very ſmooth and polite as to admit of no impreſſion), either out of an unthinking indolence, or an ill-grounded prejudice, had affixed to this ſort of ſtudies. He knew the thorny terms of philoſophy ſerved well to fence-in the true doctrines of religion; and looked upon ſchool-divinity as upon a rough but well-wrought armour, which might at once adorn and defend the Chriſtian hero, and equip him for the combat.

Mr. Smith had a long and perfect intimacy with all the Greek and Latin Claſſicks;

with whom he had carefully compared whatever was worth peruſing in the French, Spaniſh, and Italian (to which languages he was no ſtranger), and in all the celebrated writers of his own country. But then, according to the curious obſervation of the late earl of Shafteſbury, he kept the poet in awe by regular criticiſm, and as it were, married the two arts for their mutual ſupport and improvement. There was not a tract of credit, upon that ſubject, which he had not diligently examined, from Ariſtotle down to Hedelin and Boſſu; ſo that, having each rule conſtantly before him, he could carry the art through every poem, and at once point out the graces and deformities. By this means he ſeemed to read with a deſign to correct, as well as imitate.

Being thus prepared, he could not but taſte every little delicacy that was ſet before him; though it was impoſſible for him at the ſame time to be fed and nouriſhed with any thing but what was ſubſtantial and laſting. He conſidered the ancients and moderns not as parties or rivals for fame, but as architects upon one and the ſame plan, the Art of Poetry; according to which he judged,

ed, approved, and blamed, without flattery or detraction. If he did not always commend the compoſitions of others, it was not ill-nature (which was not in his temper) but ſtrict juſtice that would not let him call a few flowers ſet in ranks, a glib meaſure, and ſo many couplets by the name of poetry: he was of Ben Jonſon's opinion, who could not admire,

—Verſes as ſmooth and ſoft as cream,
In which there was neither depth nor ſtream.

And therefore, though his want of complaiſance for ſome men's overbearing vanity made him enemies, yet the better part of mankind were obliged by the freedom of his reflections.

His Bodleian Speech, though taken from a remote and imperfect copy, hath ſhewn the world how great a maſter he was of the Ciceronian eloquence, mixed with the conciſeneſs and force of Demoſthenes, the elegant and moving turns of Pliny, and the acute and wiſe reflections of Tacitus.

Since Temple and Roſcommon, no man underſtood Horace better, eſpecially as to

his happy diction, rolling numbers, beautiful imagery, and alternate mixture of the ſoft and the ſublime. This endeared Dr. Haines's odes to him, the fineſt genius for Latin lyrick ſince the Auguſtan age. His friend Mr. Philips's ode to Mr. St. John (late Lord Bolingbroke) after the manner of Horace's Luſory or Amatorian Odes, is certainly a maſter-piece: but Mr. Smith's Pocockius is of the ſublimer kind, though, like Waller's writings upon Oliver Cromwell, it wants not the moſt delicate and ſurpriſing turns peculiar to the perſon praiſed. I do not remember to have ſeen any thing like it in Dr. Bathurſt, who had made ſome attempts this way with applauſe. He was an excellent judge of humanity; and ſo good an hiſtorian, that in familiar diſcourſe he would talk over the moſt memorable facts in antiquity, the lives, actions, and characters of celebrated men, with amazing facility and accuracy. As he had thoroughly read and digeſted Thuanus's works, ſo he was able to copy after him: and his talent in this kind was ſo well known and allowed, that he had been ſingled out by ſome great men to write a hiſtory, which it was for their intereſt to have done with the utmoſt

utmoſt art and dexterity. I ſhall not mention for what reaſons this deſign was dropped, though they are very much to Mr. Smith's honour. The truth is, and I ſpeak it before living witneſſes, whilſt an agreeable company could fix him upon a ſubject of uſeful literature, nobody ſhone to greater advantage: he ſeemed to be that Memmius whom Lucretius ſpeaks of;

—Quem tu, Dea, tempore in omni
Omnibus ornatum voluiſti excellere rebus.

His works are not many, and thoſe ſcattered up and down in Miſcellanies and Collections, being wreſted from him by his friends with great difficulty and reluctance. All of them together make but a ſmall part of that much greater body which lies diſperſed in the poſſeſſion of numerous acquaintance; and cannot perhaps be made entire, without great injuſtice to him, becauſe few of them had his laſt hand, and the tranſcriber was often obliged to take the liberties of a friend. His condolance for the death of Mr. Philips is full of the nobleſt beauties, and hath done juſtice to the aſhes of that ſecond Milton, whoſe writings

writings will laſt as long as the Engliſh language, generoſity, and valour. For him Mr. Smith had contracted a perfect friendſhip; a paſſion he was moſt ſuſceptible of, and whoſe laws he looked upon as ſacred and inviolable.

Every ſubject that paſſed under his pen had all the life, proportion, and embelliſhments beſtowed on it, which an exquiſite ſkill, a warm imagination, and a cool judgement, could poſſibly beſtow on it. The epique, lyrick, elegiac, every ſort of poetry he touched upon (and he had touched upon a great variety), was raiſed to its proper height, and the differences between each of them obſerved with a judicious accuracy. We ſaw the old rules and new beauties placed in admirable order by each other; and there was a predominant fancy and ſpirit of his own infuſed, ſuperior to what ſome draw off from the ancients, or from poeſies here and there culled out of the moderns, by a painful induſtry and ſervile imitation. His contrivances were adroit and magnificent; his images lively and adequate; his ſentiments charming and majeſtick; his expreſſions natural

tural and bold; his numbers various and ſounding; and that enameled mixture of claſſical wit, which, without redundance and affectation, ſparkled through his writings, and was no leſs pertinent than agreeable.

His *Phædra* is a conſummate tragedy, and the ſucceſs of it was as great as the moſt ſanguine expectations of his friends could promiſe or foreſee. The number of nights, and the common method of filling the houſe, are not always the ſureſt marks of judging what encouragement a play meets with: but the generoſity of all the perſons of a refined taſte about town was remarkable on this occaſion; and it muſt not be forgotten how zealouſly Mr. Addiſon eſpouſed his intereſt, with all the elegant judgement and diffuſive good-nature for which that accompliſhed gentleman and author is ſo juſtly valued by mankind. But as to *Phædra*, ſhe has certainly made a finer figure under Mr. Smith's conduct, upon the Engliſh ſtage, than either Rome or Athens; and if ſhe excels the Greek and Latin *Phædra*, I need not ſay ſhe ſurpaſſes the French one, though embelliſhed with whatever regular beauties

and

and moving ſoftneſs Racine himſelf could give her.

No man had a juſter notion of the difficulty of compoſing than Mr. Smith, and he ſometimes would create greater difficulties than he had reaſon to apprehend. Writing with eaſe, what (as Mr. Wycherley ſpeaks) may be eaſily written, moved his indignation. When he was writing upon a ſubject, he would ſeriouſly conſider what Demoſthenes, Homer, Virgil, or Horace, if alive, would ſay upon that occaſion, which whetted him to exceed himſelf as well as others. Nevertheleſs, he could not, or would not, finiſh ſeveral ſubjects he undertook; which may be imputed either to the briſkneſs of his fancy, ſtill hunting after new matter, or to an occaſional indolence, which ſpleen and laſſitude brought upon him, which, of all his foibles, the world was leaſt inclined to forgive. That this was not owing to conceit and vanity, or a fulneſs of himſelf (a frailty which has been imputed to no leſs men than Shakſpeare and Jonſon), is clear from hence; becauſe he left his works to the entire diſpoſal of his friends, whoſe moſt rigorous

rigorous cenſures he even courted and ſolicited; ſubmitting to their animadverſions, and the freedom they took with them, with an unreſerved and prudent reſignation.

I have ſeen ſketches and rough draughts of ſome poems he deſigned, ſet out analytically; wherein the fable, ſtructure, and connexion, the images, incidents, moral, epiſodes, and a great variety of ornaments, were ſo finely laid out, ſo well fitted to the rules of art, and ſquared ſo exactly to the precedents of the ancients, that I have often looked on theſe poetical elements with the ſame concern, with which curious men are affected at the ſight of the moſt entertaining remains and ruins of an antique figure or building. Thoſe fragments of the learned, which ſome men have been ſo proud of their pains in collecting, are uſeleſs rarities, without form and without life, when compared with theſe embryo's, which wanted not ſpirit enough to preſerve them; ſo that I cannot help thinking, that, if ſome of them were to come abroad, they would be as highly valued by the poets, as the ſketches of Julio and

and Titian are by the painters; though there is nothing in them but a few out-lines, as to the deſign and proportion.

It muſt be confeſſed, that Mr. Smith had ſome defects in his conduct, which thoſe are moſt apt to remember who could imitate him in nothing elſe. His freedom with himſelf drew ſeverer acknowledgements from him than all the malice he ever provoked was capable of advancing, and he did not ſcruple to give even his misfortunes the hard name of faults; but if the world had half his good-nature, all the ſhady parts would be entirely ſtruck out of his character.

A man, who, under poverty, calamities, and diſappointments, could make ſo many friends, and thoſe ſo truly valuable, muſt have juſt and noble ideas of the paſſion of friendſhip, in the ſucceſs of which conſiſted the greateſt, if not the only, happineſs of his life. He knew very well what was due to his birth, though Fortune threw him ſhort of it in every other circumſtance of life.

life. He avoided making any, though perhaps reaſonable, complaints of her diſpenſations, under which he had honour enough to be eaſy, without touching the favours ſhe flung in his way when offered to him at the price of a more durable reputation. He took care to have no dealings with mankind, in which he could not be juſt; and he deſired to be at no other expence in his pretenſions than that of intrinſick merit, which was the only burthen and reproach he ever brought upon his friends. He could ſay, as Horace did of himſelf, what I never yet ſaw tranſlated;

—*Meo ſum pauper in ære.*

At his coming to town, no man was more ſurrounded by all thoſe who really had or pretended to wit, or more courted by the great men, who had then a power and opportunity of encouraging arts and ſciences, and gave proofs of their fondneſs for the name of Patron in many inſtances, which will ever be remembered to their glory. Mr. Smith's character grew upon his friends by intimacy, and outwent the ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions, which had been conceived in his favour.

vour. Whatever quarrel a few ſour creatures, whoſe obſcurity is their happineſs, may poſſibly have to the age; yet amidſt a ſtudied neglect, and total diſuſe of all thoſe ceremonial attendances, faſhionable equipments, and external recommendations, which are thought neceſſary introductions into the *grande monde*, this gentleman was ſo happy as ſtill to pleaſe; and whilſt the rich, the gay, the noble, and honourable, ſaw how much he excelled in wit and learning, they eaſily forgave him all other differences. Hence it was that both his acquaintance and retirements were his own free choice. What Mr. Prior obſerves upon a very great character, was true of him; *that moſt of his faults brought their excuſe with them.*

Thoſe who blamed him moſt, underſtood him leaſt: it being the cuſtom of the vulgar to charge an exceſs upon the moſt complaiſant, and to form a character by the morals of a few, who have ſometimes ſpoiled an hour or two in good company. Where only fortune is wanting to make a great name, that ſingle exception can never paſs upon the beſt judges and moſt equitable obſervers of mankind;

kind; and when the time comes for the world to ſpare their pity, we may juſtly enlarge our demands upon them for their admiration.

Some few years before his death, he had engaged himſelf in ſeveral conſiderable undertakings; in all which he had prepared the world to expect mighty things from him. I have ſeen about ten ſheets of his *Engliſh Pindar*, which exceeded any thing of that kind I could ever hope for in our own language. He had drawn out the plan of a tragedy of the *Lady Jane Grey*, and had gone through ſeveral ſcenes of it. But he could not well have bequeathed that work to better hands than where, I hear, it is at preſent lodged; and the bare mention of two ſuch names may juſtify the largeſt expectations, and is ſufficient to make the town an agreeable invitation.

His greateſt and nobleſt undertaking was *Longinus*. He had finiſhed an entire tranſlation of the *Sublime*, which he ſent to the reverend Mr. Richard Parker, a friend of his, late of Merton College, an exact critick

in the Greek tongue, from whom it came to my hands. The French verſion of Monſieur Boileau, though truly valuable, was far ſhort of it. He propoſed a large addition to this work, of notes and obſervations of his own, with an entire ſyſtem of the Art of Poetry, in three books, under the titles of *Thought*, *Diction*, and *Figure*. I ſaw the laſt of theſe perfect, and in a fair copy, in which he ſhewed prodigious judgement and reading; and particularly had reformed the Art of Rhetorick, by reducing that vaſt and confuſed heap of terms, with which a long ſucceſſion of pedants had encumbered the world, to a very narrow compaſs, comprehending all that was uſeful and ornamental in poetry. Under each head and chapter, he intended to make remarks upon all the ancients and moderns; the Greek, Latin, Engliſh, French, Spaniſh, and Italian poets, and to note their ſeveral beauties and defects.

What remains of his works is left, as I am informed, in the hands of men of worth and judgement, who loved him. It cannot be ſuppoſed they would ſuppreſs any thing that was his, but out of reſpect to his memory, and

and for want of proper hands to finiſh what ſo great a genius had begun.

SUCH is the declamation of Oldiſworth, written while his admiration was yet freſh, and his kindneſs warm; and therefore ſuch as, without any criminal purpoſe of deceiving, ſhews a ſtrong deſire to make the moſt of all favourable truth. I cannot much commend the performance. The praiſe is often indiſtinct, and the ſentences are loaded with words of more pomp than uſe. There is little however that can be contradicted, even when a plainer tale comes to be told.

EDMUND NEAL, known by the name of Smith, was born at Handley, the ſeat of the Lechmeres, in Worceſterſhire. The year of his birth is uncertain.

He was educated at Weſtminſter. It is known to have been the practice of Dr. Buſby to detain thoſe youths long at ſchool, of whom he had formed the higheſt expectations. Smith took his Maſter's degree on the 8th of July 1696: he therefore was probably admitted into the univerſity in 1689, when we may ſuppoſe him twenty years old.

His reputation for literature in his college was ſuch as has been told; but the indecency and licentiouſneſs of his behaviour drew upon him, Dec. 24, 1694, while he was yet only Batchelor, a publick admonition, entered upon record, in order to his expulſion. Of this reproof the effect is not known. He was probably leſs notorious. At Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit; and of that he had given ſufficient evidence by his excellent ode on the death of the

the great Orientaliſt, Dr. Pocock, who died in 1691, and whoſe praiſe muſt have been written by Smith when he had been yet but two years in the univerſity.

This ode, which cloſed the ſecond volume of the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*, though perhaps ſome objections may be made to its Latinity, is by far the beſt Lyrick compoſition in that collection; nor do I know where to find it equalled among the modern writers. It expreſſes, with great felicity, images not claſſical in claſſical diction: its digreſſions and returns have been deſervedly recommended by Trapp as models for imitation.

He has ſeveral imitations of Cowley:

Veſtitur hinc tot ſermo coloribus
Quot tu, Pococki, diſſimilis tui
Orator effers, quot viciſſim
Te memores celebrare gaudent.

I will not commend the figure which makes the orator *pronounce colours*, or give to *colours memory* and *delight*. I quote it, however, as an imitation of theſe lines;

So many languages he had in ſtore,
That only Fame ſhall ſpeak of him in more.

The ſimile, by which an old man, retaining the fire of his youth, is compared to Ætna flaming through the ſnow, which Smith has uſed with great pomp, is ſtolen from Cowley, however little worth the labour of conveyance.

He proceeded to take his degree of Maſter of Arts July 8, 1696. Of the exerciſes which he performed on that occaſion, I have not heard of any thing memorable.

As his years advanced, he advanced in reputation; for he continued to cultivate his mind; but he did not amend his irregularities, by which he gave ſo much offence, that, April 24, 1700, the Dean and Chapter declared "the place of Mr. Smith "void, he having been convicted of riotous "miſbehaviour in the houſe of Mr. Cole an "apothecary; but it was referred to the Dean "when and upon what occaſion the ſentence "ſhould be put in execution."

Thus

Thus tenderly was he treated: the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wiſhed that he would not force them to drive him away.

Some time afterwards he aſſumed an appearance of decency; in his own phraſe, he *whitened* himſelf, having a deſire to obtain the cenſorſhip, an office of honour and ſome profit in the college; but when the election came, the preference was given to Mr. *Foulkes*, his junior; the ſame, I ſuppoſe, that joined with *Freind* in an edition of part of Demoſthenes; it not being thought proper to truſt the ſuperintendance of others to a man who took ſo little care of himſelf.

From this time Smith employed his malice and his wit againſt the Dean, Dr. Aldrich, whom he conſidered as the opponent of his claim. Of his lampoon upon him, I once heard a ſingle line too groſs to be repeated.

But he was ſtill a genius and a ſcholar, and Oxford was unwilling to loſe him: he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices,

two years longer; but on Dec. 20, 1705, at the inſtance of all the canons, the ſentence declared five years before was put in execution.

The execution was, I believe, ſilent and tender; for one of his friends, from whom I learned much of his life, appeared not to know it.

He was now driven to London, where he aſſociated himſelf with the Whigs, whether becauſe they were in power, or becauſe the Tories had expelled him, or becauſe he was a Whig by principle, may perhaps be doubted. He was however careſſed by men of great abilities, whatever were their party, and was ſupported by the liberality of thoſe who delighted in his converſation.

There was once a deſign hinted at by Oldiſworth, to have made him uſeful. One evening, as he was ſitting with a friend at a tavern, he was called down by the waiter; and, having ſtaid ſome time below, came up thoughtful. After a pauſe, ſaid he to his friend, "He that wanted me below was Addiſon, whoſe buſineſs was to tell me that "a Hiſ-

"a Hiſtory of the Revolution was intended, "and to propoſe that I ſhould undertake it. "I ſaid, what ſhall I do with the character of "lord Sunderland? and Addiſon immedi- "ately returned, When, Rag, were you "drunk laſt? and went away."

Captain *Rag* was a name which he got at Oxford, by his negligence of dreſs.

This ſtory I heard from the late Mr. Clark of Lincoln's Inn, to whom it was told by the friend of Smith.

Such ſcruples might debar him from ſome profitable employments; but as they could not deprive him of any real eſteem, they left him many friends; and no man was ever better introduced to the theatre than he, who, in that violent conflict of parties, had a Prologue and Epilogue from the firſt wits on either ſide.

But learning and nature will row and then take different courſes. His play pleaſed the criticks, and the criticks only. It was, as Addiſon has recorded, hardly heard the third night. Smith had indeed truſted entirely to his

his merit; had enſured no band of applauders, nor uſed any artifice to force ſucceſs, and found that naked excellence was not ſufficient for its own ſupport.

The play, however, was bought by Lintot, who advanced the price from fifty guineas, the current rate, to ſixty; and Halifax, the general patron, accepted the dedication. Smith's indolence kept him from writing the dedication, till Lintot, after fruitleſs importunity, gave notice that he would publiſh the play without it. Now therefore it was written; and Halifax expected the author with his book, and had prepared to reward him with a place of three hundred pounds a year. Smith, by pride, or caprice, or indolence, or baſhfulneſs, neglected to attend him, though doubtleſs warned and preſſed by his friends, and at laſt miſſed his reward by not going to ſolicit it.

Addiſon has, in the *Spectator*, mentioned the neglect of Smith's tragedy as diſgraceful to the nation, and imputes it to the fondneſs for operas then prevailing. The authority of Addiſon is great; yet the voice of the people, when to pleaſe the people is the purpoſe,

poſe, deſerves regard. In this queſtion, I cannot but think the people in the right. The fable is mythological, a ſtory which we are accuſtomed to reject as falſe, and the manners are ſo diſtant from our own, that we know them not from ſympathy, but by ſtudy; the ignorant do not underſtand the action, the learned reject it as a ſchool-boy's tale; *incredulus odi*. What I cannot for a moment believe, I cannot for a moment behold with intereſt or anxiety. The ſentiments thus remote from life, are removed yet further by the diction, which is too luxuriant and ſplendid for dialogue, and envelopes the thoughts rather than diſplays them. It is a ſcholar's play, ſuch as may pleaſe the reader rather than the ſpectator; the work of a vigorous and elegant mind, accuſtomed to pleaſe itſelf with its own conceptions, but of little acquaintance with the courſe of life.

Dennis tells, in one of his pieces, that he had once a deſign to have written the tragedy of *Phædra*; but was convinced that the action was too mythological.

In 1709, a year after the exhibition of *Phædra*, died John Philips, the friend and

fellow-collegian of Smith, who, on that occaſion, wrote a poem, which juſtice muſt place among the beſt elegies which our language can ſhew, an elegant mixture of fondneſs and admiration, of dignity and ſoftneſs. There are ſome paſſages too ludicrous; but every human performance has its fault.

This elegy it was the mode among his friends to purchaſe for a guinea; and, as his acquaintance was numerous, it was a very profitable poem.

Of his *Pindar*, mentioned by Oldiſworth, I have never otherwiſe heard. His *Longinus* he intended to accompany with ſome illuſtrations, and had ſelected his inſtances of the falſe *Sublime* from the works of Blackmore.

He reſolved to try again the fortune of the Stage, with the ſtory of Lady Jane Grey. It is not unlikely that his experience of the inefficacy and incredibility of a mythological tale, might determine him to chooſe an action from Engliſh Hiſtory, at no great diſtance from our own times, which was to

end

end in a real event, produced by the operation of known characters.

A ſubject will not eaſily occur that can give more opportunites of informing the underſtanding, for which Smith was unqueſtionably qualified, or for moving the paſſions, in which I ſuſpect him to have had leſs power.

Having formed his plan, and collected materials, he declared that a few months would complete his deſign; and, that he might purſue his work with fewer avocations, he was, in June 1710, invited by Mr. George Ducket to his houſe at Gartham in Wiltſhire. Here he found ſuch opportunities of indulgence as did not much forward his ſtudies, and particularly ſome ſtrong ale, too delicious to be reſiſted. He eat and drank till he found himſelf plethorick: and then, reſolving to eaſe himſelf by evacuation, he wrote to an apothecary in the neighbourhood a preſcription of a purge ſo forcible, that the apothecary thought it his duty to delay it till he had given notice of its danger. Smith, not pleaſed with the contradiction

diction of a ſhopman, and boaſtful of his own knowledge, treated the notice with rude contempt, and ſwallowed his own medicine, which, in July 1710, brought him to the grave. He was buried at Gartham.

Many years afterwards, Ducket communicated to Oldmixon the hiſtorian, an account, pretended to have been received from Smith, that Clarendon's Hiſtory was, in its publication, corrupted by Aldrich, Smalridge, and Atterbury; and that Smith was employed to forge and inſert the alterations.

This ſtory was publiſhed triumphantly by Oldmixon, and may be ſuppoſed to have been eagerly received: but its progreſs was ſoon checked; for finding its way into the Journal of Trevoux, it fell under the eye of Atterbury, then an exile in France, who immediately denied the charge, with this remarkable particular, that he never in his whole life had once ſpoken to Smith; his company being, as muſt be inferred, not accepted by thoſe who attended to their characters.

The charge was afterwards very diligently refuted by Dr. Burton of Eaton; a man eminent

nent for literature, and, though not of the ſame party with Aldrich and Atterbury, too ſtudious of truth to leave them burthened with a falſe charge. The teſtimonies which he has collected, have convinced mankind that either Smith or Ducket were guilty of wilful and malicious falſehood.

This controverſy brought into view thoſe parts of Smith's life, which with more honour to his name might have been concealed.

Of Smith I can yet ſay a little more. He was a man of ſuch eſtimation among his companions, that the caſual cenſures or praiſes which he dropped in converſation were conſidered, like thoſe of Scaliger, as worthy of preſervation.

He had great readineſs and exactneſs of criticiſm, and by a curſory glance over a new compoſition would exactly tell all its faults and beauties.

He was remarkable for the power of reading with great rapidity, and of retaining with great fidelity what he ſo eaſily collected.

He

He therefore always knew what the preſent queſtion required; and when his friends expreſſed their wonder at his acquiſitions, made in a ſtate of apparent negligence and drunkenneſs, he never diſcovered his hours of reading or method of ſtudy, but involved himſelf in affected ſilence, and fed his own vanity with their admiration and conjectures.

One practice he had, which was eaſily obſerved: if any thought or image was preſented to his mind, that he could uſe or improve, he did not ſuffer it to be loſt; but, amidſt the jollity of a tavern, or in the warmth of converſation, very diligently committed it to paper.

Thus it was that he had gathered two quires of hints for his new tragedy; of which Rowe, when they were put into his hands, could make, as he ſays, very little uſe, but which the collector conſidered as a valuable ſtock of materials.

When he came to London, his way of life connected him with the licentious and

diſſolute; and he affected the airs and gaiety of a man of pleaſure; but his dreſs was always deficient: ſcholaſtick cloudineſs ſtill hung about him; and his merriment was ſure to produce the ſcorn of his companions.

With all his careleſſneſs, and all his vices, he was one of the murmurers at Fortune; and wondered why he was ſuffered to be poor, when Addiſon was careſſed and preferred: nor would a very little have contented him; for he eſtimated his wants at ſix hundred pounds a year.

In his courſe of reading it was particular, that he had diligently peruſed, and accurately remembered, the old romances of knight errantry.

He had a high opinion of his own merit, and ſomething contemptuous in his treatment of thoſe whom he conſidered as not qualified to oppoſe or contradict him. He had many frailties; yet it cannot but be ſuppoſed that he had great merit, who could obtain to the ſame play a prologue from Addiſon, and an epilogue from Prior; and who

could have at once the patronage of Halifax, and the praiſe of Oldiſworth.

For the power of communicating theſe minute memorials, I am indebted to my converſation with Gilbert Walmſley, late regiſter of the eccleſiaſtical court of Litchfield, who was acquainted both with Smith and Ducket; and declared, that, if the tale concerning Clarendon were forged, he ſhould ſuſpect Ducket of the falſehood; *for Rag was a man of great veracity.*

Of Gilbert Walmſley, thus preſented to my mind, let me indulge myſelf in the remembrance. I knew him very early; he was one of the firſt friends that literature procured me, and I hope that at leaſt my gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

He was of an advanced age, and I was only not a boy; yet he never received my notions with contempt. He was a Whig, with all the virulence and malevolence of his party; yet difference of opinion did not keep us apart. I honoured him, and he endured me.

He had mingled with the gay world, without exemption from its vices or its follies, but had never neglected the cultivation of his mind; his belief of Revelation was unſhaken; his learning preſerved his principles; he grew firſt regular, and then pious.

His ſtudies had been ſo various, that I am not able to name a man of equal knowledge. His acquaintance with books was great; and what he did not immediately know, he could at leaſt tell where to find. Such was his amplitude of learning, and ſuch his copiouſneſs of communication, that it may be doubted whether a day now paſſes in which I have not ſome advantage from his friendſhip.

At this man's table I enjoyed many chearful and inſtructive hours, with companions ſuch as are not often found; with one who has lengthened, and one who has gladdened life; with Dr. James, whoſe ſkill in phyſick will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am diſappointed by that ſtroke of death,

which has eclipſed the gaiety of nations, and impoveriſhed the publick ſtock of harmleſs pleaſure.

In the Library at Oxford is the following ludicrous Analyſis of *Pocockius*:

EX AUTOGRAPHO.

[Sent by the Author to Mr. Urry.]

OPUSCULUM hoc, Halberdarie ampliſſime, in lucem proferre hactenus diſtuli, judicii tui acumen ſubveritus magis quam bipennis. Tandem aliquando Oden hanc ad te mitto ſublimem, teneram, flebilem, ſuavem, qualem demum divinus (ſi muſis vacaret) ſcripſiſſet Gaſtrellus. Adeo ſcilicet ſublimem ut inter legendum dormire, adeo flebilem ut ridere velis. Cujus elegantiam ut melius inſpicias, verſum, ordinem & materiam breviter referam. 1^mus verſus de duobus præliis decantatis. 2^dus & 3^us de Lotharingio, cuniculis ſubterraneis, ſaxis, ponto, hoſtibus, & Aſia. 4^tus & 5^us de catenis, ſudibus uncis, draconibus, tigribus & crocodilis.

codilis. 6us, 7us, 8us, 9us, de Gomorrha, de Babylone, Babele, & quodam domi ſuæ peregrino. 10us, aliq. id de quodam Pocockio. 11us, 12us, de Syriâ, Solymâ. 13us, 14us, de Hoſeâ, & quercu, & de juvene quodam valde ſene. 15us, 16us, de Ætnâ & quomodo Ætna Pocockio ſit valde ſimilis. 17us, 18us, de tubâ, aſtro, umbrâ, flammis, rotis, Pocockio non neglecto. Cætera de Chriſtianis, Ottomanis, Babyloniis, Arabibus, & graviſſimâ agrorum melancholiâ; de Cæſare, Flacco, Neſtore, & miſerando juvenis cujuſdam florentiſſimi fato, anno ætatis ſuæ centeſimo prærnaturè abrepti. Quæ omnia cum accuratè expenderis, neceſſe eſt ut Oden hanc meam admirandâ planè varietati conſtare fatearis. Subito ad Batavos proficiſcor lauro ab illis donandus. Prius vero Pembrochienſes, voco ad certamen Poeticum. Vale.

Illuſtriſſima tua deoſculor crura,

E. SMITH.

D U K E.

D. U K E.

OF Mr. RICHARD DUKE I can find few memorials. He was bred at Weſtminſter and Cambridge; and Jacob relates, that he was ſome time tutor to the duke of Richmond.

He appears from his writings to have been not ill qualified for poetical compoſitions; and being conſcious of his powers, when he left the univerſity he enliſted himſelf among the wits. He was the familiar friend of Otway; and was engaged, among other popular names, in the tranſlations of Ovid and Juvenal. In his *Review*, though unfiniſhed,

finiſhed, are ſome vigorous lines. His poems are not below mediocrity; nor have I found much in them to be praiſed.

With the Wit he ſeems to have ſhared the diſſoluteneſs of the times; for ſome of his compoſitions are ſuch as he muſt have reviewed with deteſtation in his later days, when he publiſhed thoſe Sermons which *Felton* has commended.

Perhaps, like ſome other fooliſh young men, he rather talked than lived viciouſly, in an age when he that would be thought a Wit was afraid to ſay his prayers; and whatever might have been the firſt part of his life, it was ſurely condemned and reformed by his better judgement.

In 1683, being then maſter of arts, and fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, he wrote a poem on the marriage of the Lady Anne with George Prince of Denmark.

He took orders; and being made prebendary of Glouceſter, became a proctor in convocation

convocation for that church, and chaplain to Queen Anne.

In 1710, he was preſented by the biſhop of Wincheſter to the wealthy living of Witney in Oxfordſhire, which he enjoyed but a few months. On February 10, 1710-11, having returned from an entertainment, he was found dead the next morning. His death is mentioned in Swift's Journal.

K I N G.

KING.

WILLIAM KING was born in London in 1663; the ſon of Ezekiel King, a gentleman. He was allied to the family of Clarendon.

From Weſtminſter-ſchool, where he was a ſcholar on the foundation under the care of Dr. Buſby, he was at eighteen elected to Chriſt-church, in 1681; where he is ſaid to have proſecuted his ſtudies with ſo much intenſeneſs and activity, that, before he was eight years ſtanding, he had read over, and made remarks upon, twenty-two thouſand odd hundred books and manuſcripts. The books

books were certainly not very long, the manuſcripts not very difficult, nor the remarks very large; for the calculator will find that he diſpatched ſeven a-day, for every day of his eight years, with a remnant that more than ſatisfies moſt other ſtudents. He took his degree in the moſt expenſive manner, as a *grand compounder*; whence it is inferred that he inherited a conſiderable fortune.

In 1688, the ſame year in which he was made maſter of arts, he publiſhed a confutation of Varillas's account of Wicliffe; and, engaging in the ſtudy of the Civil Law, became doctor in 1692, and was admitted advocate at Doctors Commons.

He had already made ſome tranſlations from the French, and written ſome humorous and ſatirical pieces; when, in 1694, Moleſworth publiſhed his *Account of Denmark*, in which he treats the Danes and their monarch with great contempt; and takes the opportunity of inſinuating thoſe wild principles, by which he ſuppoſes liberty to be eſtabliſhed, and his adverſaries ſuſpect that

that all ſubordination and government is endangered.

This book offended prince George; and the Daniſh miniſter preſented a memorial againſt it. The principles of its author did not pleaſe Dr. King, and therefore he undertook to confute part, and laugh at the reſt. The controverſy is now forgotten; and books of this kind ſeldom live long, when intereſt and reſentment have ceaſed.

In 1697 he mingled in the controverſy between Boyle and Bentley; and was one of thoſe who tried what Wit could perform in oppoſition to Learning.

In 1699 was publiſhed by him *A Journey to London*, after the method of Dr. *Martin Liſter*. And in 1700 he ſatiriſed the Royal Society, at leaſt Sir *Hans Sloane* their preſident, in two dialogues, intituled *The Tranſactioneer*.

Though he was a regular advocate in the courts of civil and canon law, he did not love his profeſſion, nor indeed any kind of

buſineſs which interrupted his voluptuary dreams, or forced him to rouſe from that indulgence in which only he could find delight. His reputation as a civilian was yet maintained by his judgements in the courts of Delegates, and raiſed very high by the addreſs and knowledge which he diſcovered in 1700, when he defended the earl of Angleſea againſt his lady, afterwards dutcheſs of Buckinghamſhire, who ſued for a divorce, and obtained it.

The expence of his pleaſures, and neglect of buſineſs, had now leſſened his revenues; and he was willing to accept of a ſettlement in Ireland, where, about 1702, he was made judge of the admiralty, commiſſioner of the prizes, keeper of the records in Birmingham's tower, and vicar-general to Dr. Marſh the primate.

But it is vain to put wealth within the reach of him who will not ſtretch out his hand to take it. King ſoon found a friend as idle and thoughtleſs as himſelf, in *Upton*, one of the judges, who had a pleaſant houſe called Mountown, near Dublin, to which King

King frequently retired; delighting to neglect his intereſt, forget his cares, and deſert his duty.

Here he wrote *Mully of Mountown*, a poem; by which, though fanciful readers in the pride of ſagacity have given it a political interpretation, was meant originally no more than it expreſſed, as it was dictated only by the author's delight in the quiet of *Mountown*.

In 1708, when lord Wharton was ſent to govern Ireland, King returned to London, with his poverty, his idleneſs, and his wit; and publiſhed ſome eſſays called *Uſeful Tranſactions*. His *Voyage to the Iſland of Cajamai* is particularly commended. He then wrote the *Art of Love*, a poem remarkable, notwithſtanding its title, for purity of ſentiment; and in 1709 imitated Horace in an *Art of Cookery*, which he publiſhed, with ſome letters to Dr. Liſter.

In 1710 he appeared, as a lover of the Church, on the ſide of Sacheverell; and was ſuppoſed to have concurred at leaſt in the pro-

jection of *The Examiner*. His eyes were open to all the operations of Whiggiſm; and he beſtowed ſome ſtrictures upon Dr. Kennet's adulatory ſermon at the funeral of the duke of Devonſhire.

The *Hiſtory of the Heathen Gods*, a book compoſed for ſchools, was written by him in 1711. The work is uſeful; but might have been produced without the powers of King. The ſame year he publiſhed *Ruſinus*, an hiſtorical eſſay, and a poem, intended to diſpoſe the nation to think as he thought of the duke of Marlborough and his adherents.

In 1711, competence, if not plenty, was again put into his power. He was, without the trouble of attendance, or the mortification of a requeſt, made gazetteer. Swift, Freind, Prior, and other men of the ſame party, brought him the key of the gazetteer's office. He was now again placed in a profitable employment, and again threw the benefit away. An Act of Inſolvency made his buſineſs at that time particularly troubleſome; and he would not wait till hurry

ſhould

ſhould be at an end, but impatiently reſigned it, and returned to his wonted indigence and amuſements.

One of his amuſements at Lambeth, where he reſided, was to mortify Dr. Tenniſon, the archbiſhop, by a publick feſtivity, on the ſurrender of Dunkirk to Hill; an event with which Tenniſon's political bigotry did not ſuffer him to be delighted. King was reſolved to counteract his ſullenneſs, and at the expence of a few barrels of ale filled the neighbourhood with honeſt merriment.

In the Autumn of 1712 his health declined; he grew weaker by degrees, and died on Chriſtmas-day. Though his life had not been without irregularity, his principles were pure and orthodox, and his death was pious.

After this relation, it will be naturally ſuppoſed that his poems were rather the amuſements of idleneſs than efforts of ſtudy; that he endeavoured rather to divert than aſtoniſh; that his thoughts ſeldom aſpired to

ſublimity; and that, if his verſe was eaſy and his images familiar, he attained what he deſired. His purpoſe is to be merry; though perhaps, to enjoy his mirth, it may be ſometimes neceſſary to think well of his opinions.

SPRAT.

SPRAT.

SPRAT.

THOMAS SPRAT was born in 1636, at Tallaton in Devonſhire, the ſon of a clergyman; and having been educated, as he tells of himſelf, not at Weſtminſter or Eaton, but at a little ſchool by the churchyard ſide, became a commoner of Wadham College in Oxford in 1651; and, being choſen ſcholar next year, proceeded through the uſual academical courſe, and in 1657 became maſter of arts. He obtained a fellowſhip, and commenced poet.

In 1659, his poem on the death of Oliver was publiſhed, with thoſe of Dryden and Waller.

Waller. In his dedication to Dr. Wilkins he appears a very willing and liberal encomiaſt, both of the living and the dead. He implores his patron's excuſe of his verſes, both as falling *ſo infinitely below the full and ſublime genius of that excellent poet who made this way of writing free of our nation*, and being *ſo little equal and proportioned to the renown of the prince on whom they were written; ſuch great actions and lives deſerving to be the ſubject of the nobleſt pens and moſt divine phanſies.* He proceeds: *Having ſo long experienced your care and indulgence, and been formed, as it were, by your own hands, not to entitle you to any thing which my meanneſs produces, would be not only injuſtice, but ſacrilege.*

He publiſhed the ſame year a poem on the *Plague of Athens*; a ſubject of which it is not eaſy to ſay what could recommend it. To theſe he added afterwards a poem on Mr. Cowley's death.

After the Reſtoration he took orders, and by Cowley's recommendation was made chaplain to the duke of Buckingham, whom he

is ſaid to have helped in writing the *Rehearſal*. He was likewiſe chaplain to the king.

As he was the favourite of Wilkins, at whoſe houſe began thoſe philoſophical conferences and enquiries, which in time produced the Royal Society, he was conſequently engaged in the ſame ſtudies, and became one of the fellows; and when, after their incorporation, ſomething ſeemed neceſſary to reconcile the publick to the new inſtitution, he undertook to write its hiſtory, which he publiſhed in 1667. This is one of the few books which ſelection of ſentiment and elegance of diction have been able to preſerve, though written upon a ſubject flux and tranſitory. The Hiſtory of the Royal Society is now read, not with the wiſh to know what they were then doing, but how their tranſactions are exhibited by Sprat.

In the next year he publiſhed *Obſervations on Sorbiere's Voyage into England, in a Letter to Mr. Wren.* This is a work not ill performed; but perhaps rewarded with at leaſt its full proportion of prai-

In

In 1668 he publiſhed Cowley's Latin poems, and prefixed in Latin the Life of the Author; which he afterwards amplified, and placed before Cowley's Engliſh works, which were by will committed to his care.

Eccleſiaſtical benefices now fell faſt upon him. In 1668 he became a prebendary of Weſtminſter, and had afterwards the church of St. Margaret, adjoining to the Abbey. He was in 1680 made canon of Windſor, in 1683 dean of Weſtminſter; and in 1684 biſhop of Rocheſter.

The Court having thus a claim to his diligence and gratitude, he was required to write the Hiſtory of the Ryehouſe Plot; and in 1685 publiſhed *A true Account and Declaration of the horrid Conſpiracy againſt the late King, his preſent Majeſty, and the preſent Government*; a performance which he thought convenient, after the Revolution, to extenuate and excuſe.

The ſame year, being clerk of the cloſet to the king, he was made dean of the chapel-

royal; and the year afterwards received the laſt proof of his maſter's confidence, by being appointed one of the commiſſioners for eccleſiaſtical affairs. On the critical day, when the *Declaration* diſtinguiſhed the true ſons of the church of England, he ſtood neuter, and permitted it to be read at Weſtminſter; but preſſed none to violate his conſcience; and when the biſhop of London was brought before them, gave his voice in his favour.

Thus far he ſuffered intereſt or obedience to carry him; but further he refuſed to go. When he found that the powers of the eccleſiaſtical commiſſion were to be exerciſed againſt thoſe who had refuſed the Declaration, he wrote to the lords, and other commiſſioners, a formal profeſſion of his unwillingneſs to exerciſe that authority any longer, and withdrew himſelf from them. After they had read his letter, they adjourned for ſix months, and ſcarcely ever met afterwards.

When king James was frighted away, and a new government was to be ſettled, Sprat was one of thoſe who conſidered, in a conference,

ference, the great queſtion, whether the crown was vacant; and manfully ſpoke in favour of his old maſter.

He complied, however, with the new eſtabliſhment, and was left unmoleſted; but in 1692 a ſtrange attack was made upon him by one *Robert Young* and *Stephen Blackhead*, both men convicted of infamous crimes, and both, when the ſcheme was laid, priſoners in Newgate. Theſe men drew up an aſſociation, in which they whoſe names were ſubſcribed declared their reſolution to reſtore king James; to ſeize the princeſs of Orange, dead or alive; and to be ready with thirty thouſand men to meet king James when he ſhould land. To this they put the names of Sancroft, Sprat, Marlborough, Saliſbury, and others. The copy of Dr. Sprat's name was obtained by a fictitious requeſt, to which an anſwer *in his own hand* was deſired. His hand was copied ſo well, that he confeſſed it might have deceived himſelf. Blackhead, who had carried the letter, being ſent again with a plauſible meſſage, was very curious to ſee the houſe, and particularly importunate to be let into the ſtudy; where, as is ſuppoſed, he

he deſigned to leave the Aſſociation. This however was denied him, and he dropt it in a flower pot in the parlour.

Young now laid an information before the Privy Council; and May 7, 1692, the biſhop was arreſted, and kept at a meſſenger's under a ſtrict guard eleven days. His houſe was ſearched, and directions were given that the flower-pots ſhould be inſpected. The meſſengers however miſſed the room in which the paper was left. Blackhead went therefore a third time; and finding his paper where he had left it, brought it away.

The biſhop, having been enlarged, was, on June the 10th and 13th, examined again before the Privy Council, and confronted with his accuſers. Young perſiſted with the moſt obdurate impudence, againſt the ſtrongeſt evidence; but the reſolution of Blackhead by degrees gave way. There remained at laſt no doubt of the biſhop's innocence, who, with great prudence and diligence, traced the progreſs, and detected the characters of the two informers, and publiſhed an account of his own examination, and deliverance; which made

made ſuch an impreſſion upon him, that he commemorated it through life by an yearly day of thankſgiving.

With what hope, or what intereſt, the villains had contrived an accuſation which they muſt know themſelves utterly unable to prove, was never diſcovered.

After this, he paſſed his days in the quiet exerciſe of his function. When the cauſe of Sacheverell put the publick in commotion, he honeſtly appeared among the friends of the church. He lived to his ſeventy-ninth year, and died May 20, 1713.

Burnet is not very favourable to his memory; but he and Burnet were old rivals. On ſome publick occaſion they both preached before the houſe of commons. There prevailed in thoſe days an indecent cuſtom; when the preacher touched any favourite topick in a manner that delighted his audience, their approbation was expreſſed by a loud *hum*, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleaſure. When Burnet preached, part of his congregation *hummed* ſo loudly and ſo long, that

that he ſat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Sprat preached, he likewiſe was honoured with the like animating *hum*; but he ſtretched out his hand to the congregation, and cried, "Peace, peace, I pray you, peace."

This I was told in my youth by an old man, who had been no careleſs obſerver of the paſſages of thoſe times.

Burnet's ſermon, ſays Salmon, was remarkable for ſedition, and Sprat's for loyalty. Burnet had the thanks of the houſe; Sprat had no thanks, but a good living from the king; which, he ſaid, was of as much value as the thanks of the Commons.

The works of Sprat, beſides his few poems, are, The Hiſtory of the Royal Society, The Life of Cowley, The Anſwer to Sorbiere, The Hiſtory of the Ryehouſe Plot; The Relation of his own Examination, and a volume of Sermons. I have heard it obſerved, with great juſtneſs, that every book is of a different kind, and that each has its diſtinct and characteriſtical excellence.

My buſineſs is only with his poems. He conſidered Cowley as a model; and ſuppoſed that as he was imitated, perfection was approached. Nothing therefore but Pindarick liberty was to be expected. There is in his few productions no want of ſuch conceits as he thought excellent; and of thoſe our judgement may be ſettled by the firſt that appears in his praiſe of Cromwell, where he ſays that Cromwell's *fame, like man, will grow white as it grows old.*

HALIFAX.

HALIFAX.

THE life of the Earl of Halifax was properly that of an artful and active ſtateſman, employed in balancing parties, contriving expedients, and combating oppoſition, and expoſed to the viciſſitudes of advancement and degradation: but in this collection, poetical merit is the claim to attention; and the account which is here to be expected may properly be proportioned not to his influence in the ſtate, but to his rank among the writers of verſe.

Charles Montague was born April 16, 1661, at Horton in Northamptonſhire, the

ſon of Mr. George Montague, a younger ſon of the earl of Mancheſter. He was educated firſt in the country, and then removed to Weſtminſter; where in 1677 he was choſen a king's ſcholar, and recommended himſelf to Buſby by his felicity in extemporary epigrams. He contracted a very intimate friendſhip with Mr. Stepney; and in 1682, when Stepney was elected to Cambridge, the election of Montague being not to proceed till the year following, he was afraid leſt by being placed at Oxford he might be ſeparated from his companion, and therefore ſolicited to be removed to Cambridge, without waiting for the advantages of another year.

It ſeems indeed time to wiſh for a removal; for he was already a ſchool-boy of one and twenty.

His relation Dr. Montague was then maſter of the college in which he was placed a fellow commoner, and took him under his particular care. Here he commenced an acquaintance with the great Newton, which continued

continued through his life, and was at laſt atteſted by a legacy.

In 1685, his verſes on the death of king Charles made ſuch impreſſion on the earl of Dorſet, that he was invited to town, and introduced by that univerſal patron to the other wits. In 1687, he joined with Prior in the *City Mouſe and Country Mouſe*, a burleſque of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*. He ſigned the invitation to the Prince of Orange, and ſat in the convention. He about the ſame time married the counteſs dowager of Mancheſter, and intended to have taken orders; but afterwards altering his purpoſe, he purchaſed for 1500 *l.* the place of one of the clerks of the council.

After he had witten his epiſtle on the victory of the *Boyne*, his patron Dorſet introduced him to king William with this expreſſion: *Sir I have brought a* Mouſe *to wait on your Majeſty*. To which the king is ſaid to have replied, *You do well to put me in the way of making a* Man *of him*; and ordered him a penſion of five hundred pounds. This

ſtory, however current, ſeems to have been made after the event. The king's anſwer implies a greater acquaintance with our proverbial and familiar diction than king William could poſſibly have attained.

In 1691, being member in the houſe of commons, he argued warmly in favour of a law to grant the aſſiſtance of counſel in trials for high treaſon; and in the midſt of his ſpeech, falling into ſome confuſion, was for a while ſilent; but, recovering himſelf, obſerved, "how reaſonable it was to allow "counſel to men called as criminals before "a court of juſtice, when it appeared how "much the preſence of that aſſembly could "diſconcert one of their own body."

After this he roſe faſt into honours and employments, being made one of the commiſſioners of the treaſury, and called to the privy council. In 1694, he became chancellor of the Exchequer; and the next year engaged in the great attempt of the recoinage, which was in two years happily compleated. In 1696, he projected the *general fund*, and raiſed the credit of the Exchequer;

chequer; and, after enquiry concerning a grant of Iriſh crown-lands, it was determined by a vote of the commons, that Charles Montague, eſquire, *had deſerved his Majeſty's favour*. In 1698, being advanced to the firſt commiſſion of the treaſury, he was appointed one of the regency in the king's abſence: the next year he was made auditor of the Exchequer; and the year after created *baron Halifax*. He was however impeached by the commons; but the articles were diſmiſſed by the lords.

At the acceſſion of queen Anne he was diſmiſſed from the council; and in the firſt parliament of her reign was again attacked by the commons, and again eſcaped by the protection of the lords. In 1704, he wrote an anſwer to Bromley's ſpeech againſt occaſional conformity. He headed the Enquiry into the danger of the Church. In 1706, he propoſed and negotiated the Union with Scotland; and when the elector of Hanover received the garter, after the act had paſſed for ſecuring the Proteſtant Succeſſion, he was appointed to carry the enſigns of the order to the electoral court. He ſat as one of

of the judges of Sacheverell; but voted for a mild ſentence. Being now no longer in favour, he contrived to obtain a writ for ſummoning the electoral prince to parliament as duke of Cambridge.

At the queen's death he was appointed one of the regents; and at the acceſſion of George the Firſt was made earl of Halifax, knight of the garter, and firſt commiſſioner of the treaſury, with a grant to his nephew of the reverſion of the auditorſhip of the Exchequer. More was not to be had, and this he kept but a little while; for on the 19th of May, 1715, he died of an inflammation of his lungs.

Of him, who from a poet became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miſs of celebration. Addiſon began to praiſe him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets; perhaps by almoſt all, except Swift and Pope; who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death ſpoke of him, Swift with ſlight cenſure, and Pope in the character of Bufo with acrimonious contempt.

He was, as Pope ſays, *fed with dedications*; for Tickell affirms that no dedicator was unrewarded. To charge all unmerited praiſe with the guilt of flattery, and to ſuppoſe that the encomiaſt always knows and feels the falſehood of his aſſertions, is ſurely to diſcover great ignorance of human nature and human life. In determinations depending not on rules, but on experience and compariſon, judgement is always in ſome degree ſubject to affection. Very near to admiration is the wiſh to admire.

Every man willingly gives value to the praiſe which he receives, and conſiders the ſentence paſſed in his favour as the ſentence of diſcernment. We admire in a friend that underſtanding that ſelected us for confidence; we admire more, in a patron, that judgement which, inſtead of ſcattering bounty indiſcriminately, directed it to us; and thoſe performances which gratitude forbids us to blame, affection will eaſily diſpoſe us to exalt.

To theſe prejudices, hardly culpable, intereſt adds a power always operating, though not always, becauſe not willingly, perceived. The modeſty of praiſe wears gradually away; and perhaps the pride of patronage may be in time ſo increaſed, that modeſt praiſe will no longer pleaſe.

Many a blandiſhment was practiſed upon Halifax, which he would never have known, had he had no other attractions than thoſe of his poetry, of which a ſhort time has withered the beauties. It would now be eſteemed no honour, by a contributor to the monthly bundles of verſes, to be told, that, in ſtrains either familiar or ſolemn, he ſings like Montague.

PARNELL.

PARNELL.

PARNELL,

THE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a taſk which I ſhould very willingly decline, ſince it has been lately written by Goldſmith, a man of ſuch variety of powers, and ſuch felicity of performance, that he always ſeemed to do beſt that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tedioufneſs, and general without confuſion; whoſe language was copious without exuberance, exact without conſtraint, and eaſy without weakneſs.

What ſuch an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abſtract from his larger

larger narrative; and ſhall have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of a departed genius.

Τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐςὶ θανόντων.

THOMAS PARNELL was the ſon of a commonwealthſman of the ſame name, who at the Reſtoration left Congleton in Cheſhire, where the family had been eſtabliſhed for ſeveral centuries, and, ſettling in Ireland, purchaſed an eſtate, which, with his lands in Cheſhire, deſcended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and, after the uſual education at a grammar ſchool, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 1700, he became maſter of arts; and was the ſame year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a diſpenſation from the biſhop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a prieſt; and in 1705 Dr. Aſhe, the biſhop of Clogher, conferred upon him the archdeaconry of Clogher. About the ſame time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady,

lady, by whom he had two ſons who died young, and a daughter who long ſurvived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell was perſuaded to change his party, not without much cenſure from thoſe whom he forſook, and was received by the new miniſtry as a valuable reinforcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the croud in the outer room, he went, by the perſuaſion of Swift, with his treaſurer's ſtaff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours; but, as it ſeems often to have happened in thoſe times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which indeed was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was deſirous to make himſelf conſpicuous, and to ſhew how worthy he was of high perferment, as he thought himſelf qualified to become a popular preacher, he diſ-

played his elocution with great ſucceſs in the pulpits of London; but the queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope repreſents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle, is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cauſe more likely to obtain forgiveneſs from mankind, the untimely death of a darling ſon; or, as others tell, the loſs of his wife, who died (1712) in the midſt of his expectations.

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his perſonal intereſt with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbiſhop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 preſented him to the vicarage of Finglas in the dioceſe of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from ſuch a man, inclines me to believe that the vice of which he has been accuſed was not groſs, or not notorious.

But his proſperity did not laſt long. His end, whatever was its cauſe, was now approaching.

proaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Cheſter, on his way to Ireland.

He ſeems to have been one of thoſe poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably publiſhed more than he owned. He left many compoſitions behind him, of which Pope ſelected thoſe which he thought beſt, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. Of theſe Goldſmith has given an opinion, and his criticiſm it is ſeldom ſafe to contradict. He beſtows juſt praiſe upon the *Riſe of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale*, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly remarked, that in the *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in Engliſh their original effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he ſhould have added, with modern applications: and when he diſcovers that *Gay Bacchus* is tranſlated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked, that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another

poem, *When Spring comes on*, is; he ſays, taken from the French. I would add, that the deſcription of *Barrenneſs*, in his verſes to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately ſearching for the paſſage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred by Goldſmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of ſentiment. He obſerves that the ſtory of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues* and *Howell's Letters*, and ſuppoſes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

Goldſmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meaneſt; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happieſt of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I ſuſpect to have been borrowed from Cleiveland.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehenſion, or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears ſtill leſs is his own. His praiſe muſt be derived from the eaſy ſweetneſs of his diction: in his verſes there

there is *more happineſs than pains*; he is ſpritely without effort, and always delights though he never raviſhes; every thing is proper, yet every thing ſeems caſual. If there is ſome appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is leſs airy, is leſs pleaſing. Of his other compoſitions it is impoſſible to ſay whether they are the productions of Nature, ſo excellent as not to want the help of Art, or of Art ſo refined as to reſemble Nature.

This criticiſm relates only to the pieces publiſhed by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in the laſt edition, I can only ſay that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They ſtand upon the faith of the compilers.

G A R T H.

GARTH.

SAMUEL GARTH was of a good family in Yorkſhire, and from ſome ſchool in his own country became a ſtudent at Peter-houſe in Cambridge, where he reſided till he commenced doctor of phyſick on July the 7th, 1691. He was examined before the College at London on March the 12th, 1691-2, and admitted fellow July 26th, 1692. He was ſoon ſo much diſtinguiſhed, by his converſation and accompliſhments, as to obtain very extenſive practice; and, if a pamphlet of thoſe times may be credited, had the favour and confidence of one party, as Ratcliffe had of the other.

He is always mentioned as a man of benevolence; and it is juſt to ſuppoſe that his deſire of helping the helpleſs, diſpoſed him

to

to ſo much zeal for the *Diſpenſary*; an undertaking of which ſome account, however ſhort, is proper to be given.

Whether what Temple ſays be true, that phyſicians have had more learning than the other faculties, I will not ſtay to enquire; but, I believe, every man has found in phyſicians great liberality, and dignity of ſentiment, very prompt effuſion of beneficence, and willingneſs to exert a lucrative art, where there is no hope of lucre. Agreeably to this character, the College of Phyſicians, in July 1687, publiſhed an edict, requiring all the fellows, candidates, and licentiates, to give gratuitous advice to the neighbouring poor.

This edict was ſent to the Court of Aldermen; and a queſtion being made to whom the appellation of the *poor* ſhould be extended, the College anſwered, that it ſhould be ſufficient to bring a teſtimonial from a clergyman officiating in the pariſh where the patient reſided.

After a year's experience, the phyſicians found their charity fruſtrated by ſome malignant

lignant oppoſition, and made to a great degree vain by the high price of phyſick; they therefore voted, in Auguſt 1688, that the laboratory of the College ſhould be accommodated to the preparation of medicines, and another room prepared for their reception; and that the contributers to the expence ſhould manage the charity.

It was now expected that the Apothecaries would have undertaken the care of providing medicines; but they took another courſe. Thinking the whole deſign pernicious to their intereſt, they endeavoured to raiſe a faction againſt it in the College, and found ſome phyſicians mean enough to ſolicit their patronage, by betraying to them the counſels of the College. The greater part, however, enforced by a new edict in 1694, the former order of 1687, and ſent it to the mayor and aldermen, who appointed a committee to treat with the College, and ſettle the mode of adminiſtring the Charity.

It was deſired by the aldermen, that the teſtimonials of churchwardens and overſeers ſhould be admitted; and that all hired ſervants, and all apprentices to handicraftſmen,

ſhould be conſidered as *poor*. This likewiſe was granted by the College.

It was then conſidered who ſhould diſtribute the medicines, and who ſhould ſettle their prices. The phyſicians procured ſome apothecaries to undertake the diſpenſation, and offered that the warden and company of the apothecaries ſhould adjuſt the price. This offer was rejected; and the apothecaries who had engaged to aſſiſt the charity were conſidered as traytors to the company, threatened with the impoſition of troubleſome offices, and deterred from the performance of their engagements. The apothecaries ventured upon publick oppoſition, and preſented a kind of remonſtrance againſt the deſign to the committee of the city, which the phyſicians condeſcended to confute: and at laſt the traders ſeem to have prevailed among the ſons of trade; for the propoſal of the college having been conſidered, a paper of approbation was drawn up, but poſtponed and forgotten.

The phyſicians ſtill perſiſted; and in 1696 a ſubſcription was raiſed by themſelves, according to an agreement prefixed to the Diſ-

Diſpenſary. The poor were for a time ſupplied with medicines; for how long a time, I know not. The medicinal charity, like others, began with ardour, but ſoon remitted, and at laſt died gradually away.

About the time of the ſubſcription begins the action of the *Diſpenſary*. The Poem, as its ſubject was preſent and popular, cooperated with paſſions and prejudices then prevalent, and, with ſuch auxiliaries to its intrinſick merit, was univerſally and liberally applauded. It was on the ſide of charity againſt the intrigues of intereſt, and of regular learning againſt licentious uſurpation of medical authority, and was therefore naturally favoured by thoſe who read and can judge of poetry.

In 1697, Garth ſpoke that which is now called the *Harveian* Oration; which the authors of the Biographia mention with more praiſe than the paſſage quoted in their notes will fully juſtify. Garth, ſpeaking of the miſchiefs done by quacks, has theſe expreſſions: "Non tamen telis vulnerat iſta agyr-
"tarum colluvies, ſed theriacâ quadam ma-
"gis pernicioſa, non pyrio, ſed pulvere

"neſcio quo exotico certat, non globulis "plumbeis, ſed pilulis æque lethalibus in- "terficit." This was certainly thought fine by the author, and is ſtill admired by his biographer. In October 1702 he became one of the cenſors of the College.

Garth, being an active and zealous Whig, was a member of the Kit-cat club, and by conſequence familiarly known to all the great men of that denomination. In 1710, when the government fell into other hands, he writ to lord Godolphin, on his diſmiſſion, a ſhort poem, which was criticiſed in the *Examiner*, and ſo ſucceſsfully either defended or excuſed by Mr. Addiſon, that, for the ſake of the vindication, it ought to be preſerved.

At the acceſſion of the preſent Family his merits were acknowledged and rewarded. He was knighted with the ſword of his hero, Marlborough; and was made phyſician in ordinary to the king, and phyſician-general to the army.

He then undertook an edition of Ovid's Metamorphoſes, tranſlated by ſeveral hands; which

which he recommended by a Preface, written with more oſtentation than ability: his notions are half-formed, and his materials immethodically confuſed. This was his laſt work. He died Jan. 18, 1717-18, and was buried at Harrow-on-the-Hill.

His perſonal character ſeems to have been ſocial and liberal. He communicated himſelf through a very wide extent of acquaintance; and though firm in a party, at a time when firmneſs included virulence, yet he imparted his kindneſs to thoſe who were not ſuppoſed to favour his principles. He was an early encourager of Pope, and was at once the friend of Addiſon and of Granville. He is accuſed of voluptuouſneſs and irreligion; and Pope, who ſays that "if ever there was "a good Chriſtian, without knowing himſelf to be ſo, it was Dr. Garth," ſeems not able to deny what he is angry to hear and loth to confeſs.

His poetry has been praiſed at leaſt equally to its merit. In the *Diſpenſary* there is a ſtrain of ſmooth and free verſification; but few lines are eminently elegant. No paſ-

ſages

ſages fall below mediocrity, and few riſe much above it. The plan ſeems formed without juſt proportion to the ſubject; the means and end have no neceſſary connection. *Reſnel*, in his Preface to *Pope's* Eſſay, remarks, that Garth exhibits no diſcrimination of characters; and that what any one ſays might with equal propriety have been ſaid by another. The general deſign is perhaps open to criticiſm; but the compoſition can ſeldom be charged with inaccuracy or negligence. The author never ſlumbers in ſelf-indulgence; his full vigour is always exerted; ſcarce a line is left unfiniſhed, nor is it eaſy to find an expreſſion uſed by conſtraint, or a thought imperfectly expreſſed. It was remarked by Pope, that the *Diſpenſary* had been corrected in every edition, and that every change was an improvement. It appears, however, to want ſomething of poetical ardour, and ſomething of general delectation; and therefore, ſince it has been no longer ſupported by accidental and extrinſick popularity, it has been ſcarcely able to ſupport itſelf.

ROWE.

ROWE.

ROWE.

NICHOLAS ROWE was born at Little Beckford in Bedfordſhire, in 1673. His family had long poſſeſſed a conſiderable eſtate, with a good houſe, at Lambertoun * in Devonſhire. The anceſtor from whom he deſcended in a direct line, received the arms borne by his deſcendants for his bravery in the Holy War. His father John Rowe, who was the firſt that quitted his paternal acres to practiſe any art of profit, profeſſed the law, and publiſhed Benlow's and Dalliſon's Reports in the reign of James the Second, when, in oppoſition to the notions

* In the Villare, *Lamerton*.

then diligently propagated, of diſpenſing power, he ventured to remark how low his authors rated the prerogative. He was made a ſerjeant, and died April 30, 1692. He was buried in the Temple Church.

Nicholas was firſt ſent to a private ſchool at Highgate; and being afterwards removed to Weſtminſter, was at twelve years choſen one of the King's ſcholars. His maſter was Buſby, who ſuffered none of his ſcholars to let their powers lie uſeleſs; and his exerciſes in ſeveral languages are ſaid to have been written with uncommon degrees of excellence, and yet to have coſt him very little labour.

At ſixteen he had in his father's opinion made advances in learning ſufficient to qualify him for the ſtudy of law, and was entered a ſtudent of the Middle Temple, where for ſome time he read ſtatutes and reports with proficiency proportionate to the force of his mind, which was already ſuch that he endeavoured to comprehend law, not as a ſeries of precedents, or collection of poſitive precepts, but as a ſyſtem of rational government, and impartial juſtice.

When

When he was nineteen, he was by the death of his father left more to his own direction, and probably from that time ſuffered law gradually to give way to poetry. At twenty-five he produced *The Ambitious Stepmother*, which was received with ſo much favour, that he devoted himſelf from that time wholly to the more elegant parts of writing.

His next tragedy (1702) was *Tamerlane*; in which, under the name of Tamerlane, he intended to characteriſe king William, and Lewis the Fourteenth under that of Bajazet. The virtues of Tamerlane ſeem to have been arbitrarily aſſigned him by his poet, for I know not that hiſtory gives any other qualities than thoſe which make a conqueror. The faſhion however of the time was, to accumulate upon Lewis all that can raiſe horror and deteſtation; and whatever good was withheld from him, that it might not be thrown away, was beſtowed upon king William.

This was the tragedy which Rowe valued moſt, and that which probably, by the help of political auxiliaries, excited moſt applauſe;

but occaſional poetry muſt often content itſelf with occaſional praiſe. Tamerlane has for a long time been acted only once a year, on the night when king William landed. Our quarrel with Lewis has been long over, and it now gratifies neither zeal nor malice to ſee him painted with aggravated features, like a Saracen upon a ſign.

The *Fair Penitent*, his next production (1703), is one of the moſt pleaſing tragedies on the ſtage, where it ſtill keeps its turns of appearing, and probably will long keep them, for there is ſcarcely any work of any poet at once ſo intereſting by the fable, and ſo delightful by the language. The ſtory is domeſtick, and therefore eaſily received by the imagination, and aſſimilated to common life; the diction is exquiſitely harmonious, and ſoft or ſpritely as occaſion requires.

The character of *Lothario* ſeems to have been expanded by Richardſon into *Lovelace*, but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be deſpiſed, retains too much of the

the ſpectator's kindneſs. It was in the power of Richardſon alone to teach us at once eſteem and deteſtation, to make virtuous reſentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to loſe at laſt the hero in the villain.

The fifth act is not equal to the former; the events of the drama are exhauſted, and little remains but to talk of what is paſt. It has been obſerved, that the title of the play does not ſufficiently correſpond with the behaviour of Caliſta, who at laſt ſhews no evident ſigns of repentance, but may be reaſonably ſuſpected of feeling pain from detection rather than from guilt, and expreſſes more ſhame than ſorrow, and more rage than ſhame.

His next (1706) was *Ulyſſes*; which, with the common fate of mythological ſtories, is now generally neglected. We have been too early acquainted with the poetical heroes, to expect any pleaſure from their revival; to ſhew them as they have already been ſhewn, is to diſguſt by repetition; to give them new qualities or new adventures, is to offend by violating received notions.

The *Royal Convert* (1708) ſeems to have a better claim to longevity. The fable is drawn from an obſcure and barbarous age, to which fictions are moſt eaſily and properly adapted; for when objects are imperfectly ſeen, they eaſily take forms from imagination. The ſcene lies among our anceſtors in our own country, and therefore very eaſily catches attention. *Rhodogune* is a perſonage truly tragical, of high ſpirit, and violent paſſions, great with tempeſtuous dignity, and wicked with a ſoul that would have been heroic if it had been virtuous. The motto ſeems to tell that this play was not ſucceſsful.

Rowe does not always remember what his characters require. In *Tamerlane* there is ſome ridiculous mention of the God of Love; and Rhodogune, a ſavage Saxon, talks of Venus, and the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter.

This play diſcovers its own date, by a prediction of the *Union*, in imitation of Cranmer's prophetick promiſes to *Henry the Eighth*. The anticipated bleſſings of union are not very

very naturally introduced, nor very happily expreſſed.

He once (1706) tried to change his hand. He ventured on a comedy, and produced the *Biter*; with which, though it was unfavourably treated by the audience, he was himſelf delighted; for he is ſaid to have ſat in the houſe, laughing with great vehemence, whenever he had in his own opinion produced a jeſt. But finding that he and the publick had no ſympathy of mirth, he tried at lighter ſcenes no more.

After the Royal Convert (1714) appeared *Jane Shore*, written, as its author profeſſes, *in imitation of Shakſpeare's ſtyle*. In what he thought himſelf an imitator of Shakſpeare, it is not eaſy to conceive. The numbers, the diction, the ſentiments, and the conduct, every thing in which imitation can conſiſt, are remote in the utmoſt degree from the manner of Shakſpeare; whoſe dramas it reſembles only as it is an Engliſh ſtory, and as ſome of the perſons have their names in hiſtory. This play, conſiſting chiefly of domeſtick ſcenes and private diſtreſs, lays hold upon

upon the heart. The wife is forgiven becauſe ſhe repents, and the huſband is honoured becauſe he forgives. This therefore is one of thoſe pieces which we ſtill welcome on the ſtage.

His laſt tragedy (1715) was *Lady Jane Grey*. This ſubject had been choſen by Mr. Smith, whoſe papers were put into Rowe's hands ſuch as he deſcribes them in his Preface. This play likewiſe has ſunk into oblivion. From this time he gave nothing more to the ſtage.

Being by a competent fortune exempted from any neceſſity of combating his inclination, he never wrote in diſtreſs, and therefore does not appear to have ever written in haſte. His works were finiſhed to his own approbation, and bear few marks of negligence or hurry. It is remarkable that his prologues and epilogues are all his own, though he ſometimes ſupplied others; he afforded help, but did not ſolicit it.

As his ſtudies neceſſarily made him acquainted with Shakſpeare, and acquaintance produced

produced veneration, he undertook (1709) an edition of his works, from which he neither received much praiſe, nor ſeems to have expected it; yet, I believe, thoſe who compare it with former copies, will find that he has done more than he promiſed; and that, without the pomp of notes or boaſts of criticiſm, many paſſages are happily reſtored. He prefixed a life of the author, ſuch as tradition then almoſt expiring could ſupply, and a preface, which cannot be ſaid to diſcover much profundity or penetration. He at leaſt contributed to the popularity of his author.

He was willing enough to improve his fortune by other arts than poetry. He was underſecretary for three years when the duke of Queenſberry was ſecretary of ſtate, and afterwards applied to the earl of Oxford for ſome publick employment*. Oxford enjoined him to ſtudy Spaniſh; and when, ſome time afterwards, he came again, and ſaid that he had maſtered it, diſmiſſed him with this congratulation, "Then, Sir, I envy you the "pleaſure of reading Don Quixot in the "original."

* Spence.

This

This ſtory is ſufficiently atteſted; but why Oxford, who deſired to be thought a favourer of literature, ſhould thus inſult a man of acknowledged merit; or how Rowe, who was ſo keen a Whig * that he did not willingly converſe with men of the oppoſite party, could aſk preferment from Oxford, it is not now poſſible to diſcover. Pope, who told the ſtory, did not ſay on what occaſion the advice was given; and though he owned Rowe's diſappointment, doubted whether any injury was intended him, but thought it rather lord Oxford's *odd way*.

It is likely that he lived on diſcontented through the reſt of queen Anne's reign; but the time came at laſt when he found kinder friends. At the acceſſion of king George, he was made poet laureat; I am afraid by the ejection of poor Nahum Tate, who (1716) died in the Mint, where he was forced to ſeek ſhelter for extreme poverty. He was made likewiſe one of the land ſurveyors of the cuſtoms of the port of London. The prince of Wales choſe him clerk of his coun-

* Spence.

cil;

cil; and the lord chancellor Parker, as ſoon as he received the ſeals, appointed him, unaſked, ſecretary of the preſentations. Such an accumulation of employments undoubtedly produced a very conſiderable revenue.

Having already tranſlated ſome parts of *Lucan's Pharſalia*, which had been publiſhed in the Miſcellanies, and doubtleſs received many praiſes, he undertook a verſion of the whole work, which he lived to finiſh, but not to publiſh. It ſeems to have been printed under the care of Dr. Welwood, who prefixed the author's life, in which is contained the following character:

"As to his perſon it was graceful and well-
"made; his face regular, and of a manly
"beauty. As his ſoul was well lodged, ſo
"its rational and animal faculties excelled
"in a high degree. He had a quick and
"fruitful invention, a deep penetration, and
"a large compaſs of thought, with ſingular
"dexterity and eaſineſs in making his
"thoughts to be underſtood. He was maſ-
"ter of moſt parts of polite learning, eſpe-
"cially the claſſical authors, both Greek
"and

" and Latin; underſtood the French, Italian,
" and Spaniſh Languages, and ſpoke the firſt
" fluently, and the other two tolerably well.

" He had likewiſe read moſt of the Greek
" and Roman hiſtories in their original lan-
" guages, and moſt that are wrote in Engliſh,
" French, Italian, and Spaniſh. He had a
" good taſte in philoſophy; and, having a
" firm impreſſion of religion upon his mind,
" he took great delight in divinity and eccle-
" ſiaſtical hiſtory, in both which he made
" great advances in the times he retired into
" the country, which were frequent. He
" expreſſed, on all occaſions, his full perſua-
" ſion of the truth of Revealed Religion;
" and being a ſincere member of the eſtabliſh-
" ed church himſelf, he pitied, but con-
" demned not, thoſe that diſſented from it.
" He abhorred the principles of perſecuting
" men upon the account of their opinions in
" religion; and being ſtrict in his own, he
" took it not upon him to cenſure thoſe of
" another perſuaſion. His converſation was
" pleaſant, witty, and learned, without the
" leaſt tincture of affectation or pedantry;
" and his inimitable manner of diverting and
" enlivening the company, made it impoſſi-
" ble

" ble for any one to be out of humour when " he was in it. Envy and detraction ſeem- " ed to be entirely foreign to his conſtitu- " tion; and whatever provocations he met " with at any time, he paſſed them over with- " out the leaſt thought of reſentment or re- " venge. As Homer had a Zoilus, ſo Mr. " Rowe had ſometimes his; for there were " not wanting malevolent people, and pre- " tenders to poetry too, that would now-and- " then bark at his beſt performances; but " he was ſo much conſcious of his own ge- " nius, and had ſo much good-nature as to " forgive them; nor could he ever be tempt- " ed to return them an anſwer.

" The love of learning and poetry made " him not the leſs fit for buſineſs, and no- " body applied himſelf cloſer to it, when it " required his attendance. The late duke of " Queenſberry, when he was ſecretary of ſtate, " made him his ſecretary for publick affairs; " and when that truly great man came to know " him well, he was never ſo pleaſed as when " Mr. Rowe was in his company. After " the duke's death, all avenues were ſtopped " to his preferment; and during the reſt of

" that

" that reign, he paſſed his time with the " Muſes and his books, and ſometimes the " converſation of his friends.

" When he had juſt got to be eaſy in his " fortune, and was in a fair way to make it " better, death ſwept him away, and in him " deprived the world of one of the beſt men " as well as one of the beſt geniuſes of the " age. He died like a Chriſtian and a Phi- " loſopher, in charity with all mankind, " and with an abſolute reſignation to the " will of God. He kept up his good- " humour to the laſt; and took leave of " his wife and friends, immediately before " his laſt agony, with the ſame tranquillity " of mind, and the ſame indifference for " life, as though he had been upon taking " but a ſhort journey. He was twice mar- " ried, firſt to a daughter of Mr. Parſons, " one of the auditors of the revenue; and af- " terwards to a daughter of Mr. Deveniſh, " of a good family in Dorſetſhire. By the " firſt he had a ſon; and by the ſecond a " daughter, married afterwards to Mr. Fane. " He died the ſixth of December, 1718, in " the forty-fifth year of his age; and was " buried

"buried the nineteenth of the ſame month "in Weſtminſter-abbey, in the iſle where "many of our Engliſh poets are interred, "over-againſt Chaucer, his body being at- "tended by a ſelect number of his friends, "and the dean and choir officiating at the "funeral."

To this character, which is apparently given with the fondneſs of a friend, may be added the teſtimony of Pope; who ſays, in a letter to Blount, "Mr. Rowe accompa- "nied me, and paſſed a week in the Foreſt. "I need not tell you how much a man of "his turn entertained me; but I muſt ac- "quaint you, there is a vivacity and gaiety "of diſpoſition, almoſt peculiar to him, "which make it impoſſible to part from "him without that uneaſineſs which gene- "rally ſucceeds all our pleaſure."

Pope has left behind him another mention of his companion, leſs advantageous, which is thus reported by Dr. Warburton:

"Rowe, in Mr. Pope's opinion, maintain- "ed a decent character, but had no heart.

" Mr. Addiſon was juſtly offended with ſome " behaviour which aroſe from that want, " and eſtranged himſelf from him; which " Rowe felt very ſeverely. Mr. Pope, their " common friend, knowing this, took an op- " portunity, at ſome juncture of Mr. Addi- " ſon's advancement, to tell him how poor " Rowe was grieved at his diſpleaſure, and " what ſatisfaction he expreſſed at Mr. Ad- " diſon's good fortune; which he expreſſed " ſo naturally, that he (Mr. Pope) could " not but think him ſincere. Mr. Addiſon " replied, 'I do not ſuſpect that he feigned; " but the levity of his heart is ſuch, that he " is ſtruck with any new adventure; and it " would affect him juſt in the ſame manner, " if he heard I was going to be hanged.'— " Mr. Pope ſaid, he could not deny but Mr. " Addiſon underſtood Rowe well."

This cenſure time has not left us the power of confirming or refuting; but obſervation daily ſhews, that much ſtreſs is not to be laid on hyperbolical accuſations, and pointed ſentences, which even he that utters them deſires to be applauded rather than credited. Addiſon can hardly be ſuppoſed to have meant all

all that he ſaid. Few characters can bear the microſcopick ſcrutiny of wit quickened by anger; and perhaps the beſt advice to authors would be, that they ſhould keep out of the way of one another.

Rowe is chiefly to be conſidered as a tragick writer and a tranſlator. In his attempt at comedy he failed ſo ignominiouſly, that his *Biter* is not inſerted in his works; and his occaſional poems and ſhort compoſitions are rarely worthy of either praiſe or cenſure; for they ſeem the caſual ſports of a mind ſeeking rather to amuſe its leiſure than to exerciſe its powers.

In the conſtruction of his dramas, there is not much art; he is not a nice obſerver of the Unities. He extends time and varies place as his convenience requires. To vary the place is not, in my opinion, any violation of Nature, if the change be made between the acts; for it is no leſs eaſy for the ſpectator to ſuppoſe himſelf at Athens in the ſecond act, than at Thebes in the firſt; but to change the ſcene, as is done by Rowe, in the middle of an act, is to add more acts to the play, ſince

an act is ſo much of the buſineſs as is tranſacted without interruption. Rowe, by this licence, eaſily extricates himſelf from difficulties; as in *Jane Grey*, when we have been terrified with all the dreadful pomp of publick execution, and are wondering how the heroine or the poet will proceed, no ſooner has *Jane* pronounced ſome prophetick rhymes, than—paſs and be gone—the ſcene cloſes, and *Pembroke* and *Gardiner* are turned out upon the ſtage.

I know not that there can be found in his plays any deep ſearch into nature, any accurate diſcriminations of kindred qualities, or nice diſplay of paſſion in its progreſs; all is general and undefined. Nor does he much intereſt or affect the auditor, except in *Jane Shore*, who is always ſeen and heard with pity. *Alicia* is a character of empty noiſe, with no reſemblance to real ſorrow or to natural madneſs.

Whence, then, has Rowe his reputation? From the reaſonableneſs and propriety of ſome of his ſcenes, from the elegance of his diction, and the ſuavity of his verſe. He ſeldom moves

moves either pity or terror, but he often elevates the ſentiments; he ſeldom pierces the breaſt, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the underſtanding.

His tranſlation of the *Golden Verſes*, and of the firſt book of *Quillet's* Poem, have nothing in them remarkable. The *Golden Verſes* are tedious. The verſion of *Lucan* is one of the greateſt productions of Engliſh poetry; for there is perhaps none that ſo completely exhibits the genius and ſpirit of the original. *Lucan* is diſtinguiſhed by a kind of dictatorial or philoſophick dignity, rather, as Quintilian obſerves, declamatory than poetical; full of ambitious morality and pointed ſentences, compriſed in vigorous and animated lines. This character Rowe has very diligently and ſucceſsfully preſerved. His verſification, which is ſuch as his contemporaries practiſed, without any attempt at innovation or improvement, ſeldom wants either melody or force. His author's ſenſe is ſometimes a little diluted by additional infuſions, and ſometimes weakened by too much expanſion. But ſuch faults are to be expected in all tranſlations, from the conſtraint of meaſures and

diſſimilitude of languages. The *Pharſalia* of Rowe deſerves more notice than it obtains, and as it is more read will be more eſteemed.

ADDISON.

ADDISON.

ADDISON.

JOSEPH ADDISON was born on the firſt of May, 1672, at Milſton, of which his father, Lancelot Addiſon, was then rector, near Ambroſbury in Wiltſhire, and appearing weak and unlikely to live, he was chriſtened the ſame day. After the uſual domeſtick education, which, from the character of his father, may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to have given him ſtrong impreſſions of piety, he was committed to the care of Mr. Naiſh at Ambroſbury, and afterwards of Mr. Taylor at Saliſbury.

Not to name the ſchool or the maſters of men illuſtrious for literature, is a kind of hiſtorical fraud, by which honeſt fame is injuriouſly

juriouſly diminiſhed: I would therefore trace him through the whole proceſs of his education. In 1683, in the beginning of his twelfth year, his father being made dean of Lichfield, naturally carried his family to his new reſidence, and, I believe, placed him for ſome time, probably not long, under Mr. Shaw, then maſter of the ſchool at Lichfield, father of the late Dr. Peter Shaw. Of this interval his biographers have given no account, and I know it only from a ſtory of a *barring-out*, told me, when I was a boy, by Andrew Corbet of Shropſhire, who had heard it from Mr. Pigot his uncle.

The practice of *barring-out*, was a ſavage licenſe, practiſed in many ſchools to the end of the laſt century, by which the boys, when the periodical vacation drew near, growing petulant at the approach of liberty, ſome days before the time of regular receſs, took poſſeſſion of the ſchool, of which they barred the doors, and bade their maſter defiance from the windows. It is not eaſy to ſuppoſe that on ſuch occaſions the maſter would do more than laugh; yet, if tradition may be credited, he often ſtruggled hard to force

force or ſurpriſe the garriſon. The maſter, when Pigot was a ſchool-boy, was *barred-out* at Lichfield, and the whole operation, as he ſaid, was planned and conducted by Addiſon.

To judge better of the probability of this ſtory, I have enquired when he was ſent to the Chartreux; but, as he was not one of thoſe who enjoyed the Founder's benefaction, there is no account preſerved of his admiſſion. At the ſchool of the Chartreux, to which he was removed either from that of Saliſbury or Lichfield, he purſued his juvenile ſtudies under the care of Dr. Ellis, and contracted that intimacy with Sir Richard Steele, which their joint labours have ſo effectually recorded.

Of this memorable friendſhip the greater praiſe muſt be given to Steele. It is not hard to love thoſe from whom nothing can be feared, and Addiſon never conſidered Steele as a rival; but Steele lived, as he confeſſes, under an habitual ſubjection to the predominating genius of Addiſon, whom he always mentioned with reverence, and treated with obſequiouſneſs.

Addiſon*, who knew his own dignity, could not always forbear to ſhew it, by playing a little upon his admirer; but he was in no danger of retort: his jeſts were endured without reſiſtance or reſentment.

But the ſneer of jocularity was not the worſt. Steele, whoſe imprudence of generoſity, or vanity of profuſion, kept him always incurably neceſſitous, upon ſome preſſing exigence, in an evil hour, borrowed an hundred pounds of his friend, probably without much purpoſe of repayment; but Addiſon, who ſeems to have had other notions of a hundred pounds, grew impatient of delay, and reclaimed his loan by an execution. Steele felt with great ſenſibility the obduracy of his creditor; but with emotions of ſorrow rather than of anger.

In 1687 he was entered into Queen's College in Oxford, where, in 1689, the accidental peruſal of ſome Latin verſes gained him the patronage of Dr. Lancaſter, afterwards provoſt of Queen's College; by whoſe

* Spence.

recommendation he was elected into Magdalen College as a Demy, a term by which that ſociety denominates thoſe which are elſewhere called Scholars; young men, who partake of the founder's benefaction, and ſucceed in their order to vacant fellowſhips *.

Here he continued to cultivate poetry and criticiſm, and grew firſt eminent by his Latin compoſitions, which are indeed entitled to particular praiſe. He has not confined himſelf to the imitation of any ancient author, but has formed his ſtyle from the general language, ſuch as a diligent peruſal of the productions of different ages happened to ſupply.

His Latin compoſitions ſeem to have had much of his fondneſs; for he collected a ſecond volume of the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*, perhaps for a convenient receptacle, in which all his Latin pieces are inſerted, and where his Poem on the Peace has the firſt place. He afterwards preſented the collection to Boi-

* He took the degree of M. A. Feb. 14, 1693.

leau,

leau, who from that time *conceived*, ſays Tickell, *an opinion of the Engliſh genius for poetry*. Nothing is better known of Boileau, than that he had an injudicious and peeviſh contempt of modern Latin; and therefore his profeſſion of regard was probably the effect of his civility rather than approbation.

Three of his Latin poems are upon ſubjects on which perhaps he would not have ventured to have written in his own language. *The Battle of the Pigmies and Cranes*; *The Barometer*; and *a Bowling-green*. When the matter is low or ſcanty, a dead language, in which nothing is mean becauſe nothing is familiar, affords great conveniences; and by the ſonorous magnificence of Roman ſyllables, the writer conceals penury of thought, and want of novelty, often from the reader, and often from himſelf.

In his twenty-ſecond year he firſt ſhewed his power of Engliſh poetry, by ſome verſes addreſſed to Dryden; and ſoon afterwards publiſhed a tranſlation of the greater part of the Fourth Georgick upon Bees; after which, ſays Dryden, *my latter ſwarm is hardly worth the hiving*.

About

About the ſame time he compoſed the arguments prefixed to the ſeveral books of Dryden's Virgil; and produced an Eſſay on the Georgicks, juvenile, ſuperficial, and uninſtructive, without much either of the ſcholar's learning or the critick's penetration.

His next paper of verſes contained a character of the principal Engliſh poets, inſcribed to Henry Sacheverell, who was then, if not a poet, a writer of verſes; as is ſhewn by his verſion of a ſmall part of Virgil's Georgicks, publiſhed in the Miſcellanies, and a Latin encomium on queen Mary, in the Muſæ Anglicanæ. Theſe verſes exhibit all the fondneſs of friendſhip; but on one ſide or the other, friendſhip was too weak for the malignity of faction.

In this poem is a very confident and diſcriminative character of Spenſer, whoſe work he had then never read*. So little ſometimes is criticiſm the effect of judgement. It is neceſſary to inform the reader, that about this time he was introduced by Con-

* Spence.

greve

greve to Montague, then Chancellor of the Exchequer: Addiſon was then learning the trade of a courtier, and ſubjoined Montague as a poetical name to thoſe of Cowley and of Dryden.

By the influence of Mr. Montague, concurring, according to Tickell, with his natural modeſty, he was diverted from his orinal deſign of entering into holy orders. Montague alleged the corruption of men who engaged in civil employments without liberal education; and declared, that, though he was repreſented as an enemy to the Church, he would never do it any injury but by withholding Addiſon from it.

Soon after (in 1695) he wrote a poem to king William, with a kind of rhyming introduction addreſſed to lord Somers. King William had no regard to elegance or literature; his ſtudy was only war; yet by a choice of miniſters, whoſe diſpoſition was very different from his own, he procured, without intention, a very liberal patronage to poetry. Addiſon was careſſed both by Somers and Montague.

In

In 1697, he wrote his poem on the peace of Ryſwick, which he dedicated to Montague, and which was afterwards called by Smith *the beſt Latin poem ſince the Æneid.* Praiſe muſt not be too rigorouſly examined; but the performance cannot be denied to be vigorous and elegant.

Having yet no publick employment, he obtained (in 1699) a penſion of three hundred pounds a year, that he might be enabled to travel. He ſtaid a year at Blois *, probably to learn the French language; and then proceeded in his journey to Italy, which he ſurveyed with the eyes of a poet.

While he was travelling at leiſure, he was far from being idle; for he not only collected his obſervations on the country, but found time to write his Dialogues on Medals, and four acts of Cato. Such is the relation of Tickell. Perhaps he only collected his materials, and formed his plan:

Whatever were his other employments in Italy, he there wrote the letter to lord Hali-

* Spence.

ſax, which is juſtly conſidered as the moſt elegant, if not the moſt ſublime, of his poetical productions. But in about two years he found it neceſſary to haſten home; being, as Swift informs us, diſtreſſed by indigence, and compelled to become the tutor of a travelling Squire.

At his return he publiſhed his Travels, with a dedication to lord Somers. As his ſtay in foreign countries was ſhort, his obſervations are ſuch as might be ſupplied by a haſty view, and conſiſt chiefly in compariſons of the preſent face of the country with the deſcriptions left us by the Roman poets, from whom he made preparatory collections, of which he might have ſpared the trouble, had he known that ſuch collections had been made twice before by Italian authors.

The moſt amuſing paſſage of his book, is his account of the minute republick of San Marino; of many parts it is not a very ſevere cenſure to ſay that they might have been written at home. His elegance of language, and variegation of proſe and verſe, however, gains upon the reader; and the book, though

a while neglected, became in time ſo much the favourite of the publick, that before it was reprinted it roſe to five times its price.

When he returned to England (in 1702), with a meanneſs of appearance which gave teſtimony of the difficulties to which he had been reduced, he found his old patrons out of power, and was therefore for a time at full leiſure for the cultivation of his mind, and a mind ſo cultivated gives reaſon to believe that little time was loſt.

But he remained not long neglected or uſeleſs. The victory at Blenheim (1704) ſpread triumph and confidence over the nation; and lord Godolphin lamenting to lord Halifax, that it had not been celebrated in a manner equal to the ſubject, deſired him to propoſe it to ſome better poet. Halifax told him that there was no encouragement for genius; that worthleſs men were unprofitably enriched with publick money, without any care to find or employ thoſe whoſe appearance might do honour to their country. To this Godolphin replied, that ſuch abuſes ſhould in time be rectified; and that if a

man could be found capable of the taſk then propoſed, he ſhould not want an ample recompenſe. Halifax then named Addiſon; but required that the Treaſurer ſhould apply to him in his own perſon. Godolphin ſent the meſſage by Mr. Boyle, afterwards lord Carleton; and Addiſon having undertaken the work, communicated it to the Treaſurer, while it was yet advanced no further than the ſimile of the Angel, and was immediately rewarded by ſucceeding Mr. Locke in the place of *Commiſſioner of Appeals*.

In the following year he was at Hanover with lord Halifax; and the year after was made under-ſecretary of ſtate, firſt to Sir Charles Hedges, and in a few months more to the earl of Sunderland.

About this time the prevalent taſte for Italian operas inclined him to try what would be the effect of a muſical Drama in our own language. He therefore wrote the opera of Roſamond, which, when exhibited on the ſtage, was either hiſſed or neglected; but truſting that the readers would do him more juſtice, he publiſhed it, with an inſcription

tion to the dutcheſs of Marlborough; a woman without ſkill, or pretenſions to ſkill, in poetry or literature. His dedication was therefore an inſtance of ſervile abſurdity, to be exceeded only by Joſhua Barnes's dedication of a Greek Anacreon to the Duke.

His reputation had been ſomewhat advanced by *The Tender Huſband*, a comedy which Steele dedicated to him, with a confeſſion that he owed to him ſeveral of the moſt ſucceſsful ſcenes. To this play Addiſon ſupplied a prologue.

When the marquis of Wharton was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland, Addiſon attended him as his ſecretary; and was made keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, with a ſalary of three hundred pounds a year. The office was little more than nominal, and the ſalary was augmented for his accommodation.

Intereſt and faction allow little to the operation of particular diſpoſitions, or private opinions. Two men of perſonal characters more oppoſite than thoſe of Wharton and Addiſon,

diſon, could not eaſily be brought together. Wharton was impious, profligate, and ſhameleſs, without regard, or appearance of regard, to right and wrong: whatever is contrary to this, may be ſaid of Addiſon; but as agents of a party they were connected, and how they adjuſted their other ſentiments we cannot know.

Addiſon muſt however not be too haſtily condemned. It is not neceſſary to refuſe benefits from a bad man, when the acceptance implies no approbation of his crimes; nor has the ſubordinate officer any obligation to examine the opinions or conduct of thoſe under whom he acts, except that he may not be made the inſtrument of wickedneſs. It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that Addiſon counteracted, as far as he was able, the malignant and blaſting influence of the Lieutenant, and that at leaſt by his intervention ſome good was done, and ſome miſchief prevented.

When he was in office, he made a law to himſelf, as Swift has recorded, never to remit his regular fees in civility to his friends: "For," ſaid he, "I may have a hundred "friends;

"friends; and, if my fee be two guineas, I "ſhall, by relinquiſhing my right, loſe two "hundred guineas, and no friend gain more "than two; there is therefore no proportion "between the good imparted and the evil "ſuffered."

He was in Ireland when Steele, without any communication of his deſign, began the publication of the Tatler; but he was not long concealed: by inſerting a remark on Virgil, which Addiſon had given him, he diſcovered himſelf. It is indeed not eaſy for any man to write upon literature, or common life, ſo as not to make himſelf known to thoſe with whom he familiarly converſes, and who are acquainted with his track of ſtudy, his favourite topicks, his peculiar notions, and his habitual phraſes.

If Steele deſired to write in ſecret, he was not lucky; a ſingle month detected him. His firſt Tatler was publiſhed April 22 (1709), and Addiſon's contribution appeared May 26. Tickell obſerves, that the Tatler began and was concluded without his concurrence. This is doubtleſs literally true;

but the work did not ſuffer much by his unconſciouſneſs of its commencement, or his abſence at its ceſſation; for he continued his aſſiſtance to December 23, and the paper ſtopped on January 2. He did not diſtinguiſh his pieces by any ſignature; and I know not whether his name was not kept ſecret, till the papers were collected into volumes.

To the Tatler, in about two months, ſucceeded the Spectator; a ſeries of eſſays of the ſame kind, but written with leſs levity, upon a more regular plan, and publiſhed daily. Such an undertaking ſhewed the writers not to diſtruſt their own copiouſneſs of materials or facility of compoſition, and their performance juſtified their confidence. They found, however, in their progreſs, many auxiliaries. To attempt a ſingle paper was no terrifying labour: many pieces were offered, and many were received.

Addiſon had enough of the zeal of party, but Steele had at that time almoſt nothing elſe. The Spectator, in one of the firſt papers, ſhewed the political tenets of its authors; but

but a reſolution was ſoon taken, of courting general approbation by general topicks, and ſubjects on which faction had produced no diverſity of ſentiments; ſuch as literature, morality, and familiar life. To this practice they adhered with very few deviations. The ardour of Steele once broke out in praiſe of Marlborough; and when Dr. Fleetwood prefixed to ſome ſermons a preface, overflowing with whiggiſh opinions, that it might be read by the Queen, it was reprinted in the Spectator.

To teach the minuter decencies and inferior duties, to regulate the practice of daily converſation, to correct thoſe depravities which are rather ridiculous than criminal, and remove thoſe grievances which, if they produce no laſting calamities, impreſs hourly vexation, was firſt attempted in Italy by *Caſa* in his book of *Manners*, and *Caſtiglione* in his *Courtier*; two books yet celebrated in Italy for purity and elegance, and which, if they are now leſs read, are neglected only becauſe they have effected that reformation which their authors intended, and their precepts now are no longer wanted. Their uſefulneſs to the age in which they were written,

ten, is ſufficiently atteſted by the tranſlations which almoſt all the nations of Europe were in haſte to obtain.

This ſpecies of inſtruction was continued, and perhaps advanced, by the French; among whom *La Bruyere's* Manners of the Age, though, as Boileau remarked, it is written without connection, certainly deſerves great praiſe, for livelineſs of deſcription and juſtneſs of obſervation.

Before the Tatler and Spectator, if the writers for the theatre are excepted, England had no maſters of common life. No writers had yet undertaken to reform either the ſavageneſs of neglect, or the impertinence of civility; to teach when to ſpeak, or to be ſilent; how to refuſe, or how to comply. We wanted not books to teach us our more important duties, and to ſettle opinions in philoſophy or politicks; but an *Arbiter elegantiarum*, a judge of propriety, was yet wanting, who ſhould ſurvey the track of daily converſation, and free it from thorns and prickles, which teaze the paſſer, though they do not wound him.

For

For this purpoſe nothing is ſo proper as the frequent publication of ſhort papers, which we read not as ſtudy but amuſement. If the ſubject be ſlight, the treatiſe likewiſe is ſhort. The buſy may find time, and the idle may find patience.

This mode of conveying cheap and eaſy knowledge began among us in the Civil War, when it was much the intereſt of either party to raiſe and fix the prejudices of the people. At that time appeared Mercurius Aulicus, Mercurius Ruſticus, and Mercurius Civicus. It is ſaid, that when any title grew popular, it was ſtolen by the antagoniſt, who by this ſtratagem conveyed his notions to thoſe who would not have received him had he not worn the appearance of a friend. The tumult of thoſe unhappy days left ſcarcely any man leiſure to treaſure up occaſional compoſitions; and ſo much were they neglected, that a complete collection is no where to be found.

Theſe Mercuries were ſucceeded by L'Eſtrange's Obſervator, and that by Leſley's Rehearſal,

hearſal, and perhaps by others; but hitherto nothing had been conveyed to the people, in this commodious manner, but controverſy relating to the Church or State; of which they taught many to talk, whom they could not teach to judge.

It has been ſuggeſted that the Royal Society was inſtituted ſoon after the Reſtoration, to divert the attention of the people from publick diſcontent. The Tatler and Spectator had the ſame tendency: they were publiſhed at a time when two parties, loud, reſtleſs, and violent, each with plauſible declarations, and each perhaps without any diſtinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political conteſt, they ſupplied cooler and more inoffenſive reflections; and it is ſaid by Addiſon, in a ſubſequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the converſation of that time, and taught the frolick and the gay to unite merriment with decency; an effect which they can never wholly loſe, while they continue to be among the firſt books by which both ſexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge.

The

The Tatler and Spectator reduced, like Caſa, the unſettled practice of daily intercourſe to propriety and politeneſs; and, like La Bruyere, exhibited the *Characters and Manners of the Age.* The perſonages introduced in theſe papers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conſpicuous in various ſtations. Of the Tatler this is told by Steele in his laſt paper, and of the Spectator by Budgell in the Preface to Theophraſtus; a book which Addiſon has recommended, and which he was ſuſpected to have reviſed, if he did not write it. Of thoſe portraits, which may be ſuppoſed to be ſometimes embelliſhed, and ſometimes aggravated, the originals are partly known, and partly forgotten.

But to ſay that they united the plans of two or three eminent writers, is to give them but a ſmall part of their due praiſe; they ſuperadded literature and criticiſm, and ſometimes towered far above their predeceſſors; and taught, with great juſtneſs of argument and dignity of language, the moſt important duties and ſublime truths.

All

All theſe topicks were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of ſtyle and felicities of invention.

It is recorded by Budgell, that of the characters feigned or exhibited in the Spectator, the favourite of Addiſon was Sir Roger de Coverley, of whom he had formed a very delicate and diſcriminated idea, which he would not ſuffer to be violated; and therefore when Steele had ſhewn him innocently picking up a girl in the Temple, and taking her to a tavern, he drew upon himſelf ſo much of his friend's indignation, that he was forced to appeaſe him by a promiſe of forbearing Sir Roger for the time to come.

The reaſon which induced Cervantes to bring his hero to the grave, *para mi ſola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el,* made Addiſon declare, with an undue vehemence of expreſſion, that he would kill Sir Roger; being of opinion that they were born for one another, and that any other hand would do him wrong.

It

It may be doubted whether Addiſon ever filled up his original delineation. He deſcribes his Knight as having his imagination ſomewhat warped; but of this perverſion he has made very little uſe. The irregularities in Sir Roger's conduct, ſeem not ſo much the effects of a mind deviating from the beaten track of life, by the perpetual preſſure of ſome overwhelming idea, as of habitual ruſticity, and that negligence which ſolitary grandeur naturally generates.

The variable weather of the mind, the flying vapours of incipient madneſs, which from time to time cloud reaſon, without eclipſing it, it requires ſo much nicety to exhibit, that Addiſon ſeems to have been deterred from proſecuting his own deſign.

To Sir Roger, who, as a country gentleman, appears to be a Tory, or, as it is gently expreſſed, an adherent to the landed intereſt, is oppoſed Sir Andrew Freeport, a new man, a wealthy merchant, zealous for the moneyed intereſt, and a Whig. Of this contrariety of opinions, it is probable more conſequences were

were at firſt intended, than could be produced when the reſolution was taken to exclude party from the paper. Sir Andrew does but little, and that little ſeems not to have pleaſed Addiſon, who, when he diſmiſſed him from the club, changed his opinions. Steele had made him, in the true ſpirit of unfeeling commerce, declare that he *would not build an hoſpital for idle people*; but at laſt he buys land, ſettles in the country, and builds not a manufactory, but an hoſpital for twelve old huſbandmen, for men with whom a merchant has little acquaintance, and whom he commonly conſiders with little kindneſs.

Of eſſays thus elegant, thus inſtructive, and thus commodiouſly diſtributed, it is natural to ſuppoſe the approbation general and the ſale numerous. I once heard it obſerved, that the ſale may be calculated by the product of the tax, related in the laſt number to produce more than twenty pounds a week, and therefore rated at one and twenty pounds, or three pounds ten ſhillings a day: this, at a half-penny a paper, will give ſixteen hundred and eighty for the daily number.

5. This

This ſale is not great; yet this, if Swift be credited, was likely to grow leſs; for he declares that the Spectator, whom he ridicules for his endleſs mention of the *fair ſex*, had before his receſs wearied his readers.

The next year (1713), in which Cato came upon the ſtage, was the grand climacterick of Addiſon's reputation. Upon the death of Cato, he had, as is ſaid, planned a tragedy in the time of his travels, and had for ſeveral years the four firſt acts finiſhed, which were ſhewn to ſuch as were likely to ſpread their admiration. They were ſeen by Pope, and by Cibber; who relates that Steele, when he took back the copy, told him, in the deſpicable cant of literary modeſty, that, whatever ſpirit his friend had ſhewn in the compoſition, he doubted whether he would have courage ſufficient to expoſe it to the cenſure of a Britiſh audience.

The time however was now come, when thoſe who affected to think liberty in danger, affected likewiſe to think that a ſtage-play might preſerve it: and Addiſon was im-

portuned, in the name of the tutelary deities of Britain, to ſhew his courage and his zeal by finiſhing his deſign.

To reſume his work he ſeemed perverſely and unaccountably unwilling; and by a requeſt, which perhaps he wiſhed to be denied, deſired Mr. Hughes to add a fifth act. Hughes ſuppoſed him ſerious; and, undertaking the ſupplement, brought in a few days ſome ſcenes for his examination; but he had in the mean time gone to work himſelf, and produced half an act, which he afterwards completed, but with brevity irregularly diſproportionate to the foregoing parts; like a taſk performed with reluctance, and hurried to its concluſion.

It may yet be doubted whether Cato was made publick by any change of the author's purpoſe; for Dennis charged him with raiſing prejudices in his own favour by falſe poſitions of preparatory criticiſm, and with *poiſoning the town* by contradicting in the Spectator the eſtabliſhed rule of poetical juſtice, becauſe his own hero, with all his virtues, was to fall before a tyrant. The fact is certain; the motives we muſt gueſs.

Addiſon

Addiſon was, I believe, ſufficiently diſpoſed to bar all avenues againſt all danger. When Pope brought him the prologue, which is properly accommodated to the play, there were theſe words, *Britons, ariſe, be worth like this approved*; meaning nothing more than, Britons erect and exalt yourſelves to the approbation of publick virtue. Addiſon was frighted leſt he ſhould be thought a promoter of inſurrection, and the line was liquidated to *Britons, attend.*

Now, *heavily in clouds came on the day, the great, the important day*, when Addiſon was to ſtand the hazard of the theatre. That there might, however, be left as little to hazard as was poſſible, on the firſt night Steele, as himſelf relates, undertook to pack an audience. This, ſays Pope *, had been tried for the firſt time in favour of the Diſtreſt Mother; and was now, with more efficacy, practiſed for Cato.

The danger was ſoon over. The whole nation was at that time on fire with faction.

* Spence.

The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a ſatire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to ſhew that the ſatire was unfelt. The ſtory of Bolingbroke is well known. He called Booth to his box, and gave him fifty guineas for defending the cauſe of Liberty ſo well againſt a perpetual dictator. The Whigs, ſays Pope, deſign a ſecond preſent, when they can accompany it with as good a ſentence.

The play, ſupported thus by the emulation of factious praiſe, was acted night after night for a longer time than, I believe, the publick had allowed to any drama before; and the author, as Mrs. Porter related, wandered through the whole exhibition behind the ſcenes with reſtleſs and unappeaſable ſolicitude.

When it was printed, notice was given that the Queen would be pleaſed if it was dedicated to her; *but as he had deſigned that compliment elſewhere, he found himſelf obliged,* ſays Tickell, *by his duty on the one hand, and his*

his honour on the other, to ſend it into the world without any dedication.

Human happineſs has always its abatements; the brighteſt ſun-ſhine of ſucceſs is not without a cloud. No ſooner was Cato offered to the reader, than it was attacked by the acute malignity of Dennis, with all the violence of angry criticiſm. Dennis, though equally zealous, and probably by his temper more furious than Addiſon, for what they called liberty, and though a flatterer of the Whig miniſtry, could not ſit quiet at a ſucceſsful play; but was eager to tell friends and enemies, that they had miſplaced their admirations. The world was too ſtubborn for inſtruction; with the fate of the cenſurer of Corneille's Cid, his animadverſions ſhewed his anger without effect, and Cato continued to be praiſed.

Pope had now an opportunity of courting the friendſhip of Addiſon, by vilifying his old enemy, and could give reſentment its full play without appearing to revenge himſelf. He therefore publiſhed *A Narrative of the madneſs of John Dennis*; a performance

which left the objections to the play in their full force, and therefore diſcovered more deſire of vexing the critick than of defending the poet.

Addiſon who was no ſtranger to the world, probably ſaw the ſelfiſhneſs of Pope's friendſhip; and, reſolving that he ſhould have the conſequences of his officiouſneſs to himſelf, informed Dennis by Steele, that he was ſorry for the inſult; and that whenever he ſhould think fit to anſwer his remarks, he would do it in a manner to which nothing could be objected.

The greateſt weakneſs of the play is in the ſcenes of love, which are ſaid by Pope * to have been added to the original plan upon a ſubſequent review, in compliance with the popular practice of the ſtage. Such an authority it is hard to reject; yet the love is ſo intimately mingled with the whole action, that it cannot eaſily be thought extrinſick and adventitious; for if it were taken away, what would be left? or how were the four acts filled in the firſt draught?

* Spence.

At

At the publication the Wits ſeemed proud to pay their attendance with encomiaſtick verſes. The beſt are from an unknown hand, which will perhaps loſe ſomewhat of their praiſe when the author is known to be Jeffreys.

Cato had yet other honours. It was cenſured as a party-play by a *Scholar of Oxford*, and defended in a favourable examination by Dr. Sewel. It was tranſlated by Salvini into Italian, and acted at Florence; and by the Jeſuits of St. Omer's into Latin, and played by their pupils. Of this verſion a copy was ſent to Mr. Addiſon: it is to be wiſhed that it could be found, for the ſake of comparing their verſion of the ſoliloquy with that of Bland.

A tragedy was written on the ſame ſubject by Des Champs, a French poet, which was tranſlated, with a criticiſm on the Engliſh play. But the tranſlator and the critick are now forgotten.

Dennis lived on unanſwered, and therefore little read: Addiſon knew the policy of lite-

rature too well to make his enemy important, by drawing the attention of the publick upon a criticiſm, which, though ſometimes intemperate, was often irrefragable.

While Cato was upon the ſtage, another daily paper, called *The Guardian*, was publiſhed by Steele. To this, Addiſon gave great aſſiſtance, whether occaſionally or by previous engagement is not known.

The character of Guardian was too narrow and too ſerious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and the decencies of life, but ſeemed not to include literary ſpeculations, and was in ſome degree violated by merriment and burleſque. What had the Guardian of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with neſts of [illegible]nts, or with Strada's proluſions?

Of this paper nothing is neceſſary to be ſaid, but that it found many contributors, and that it was a continuation of the Spectator, with the ſame elegance, and the ſame variety, till ſome unlucky ſparkle from a Tory paper ſet Steele's politicks on fire, and wit

wit at once blazed into faction. He was ſoon too hot for neutral topicks, and quitted the *Guardian* to write the *Engliſhman*.

The papers of Addiſon are marked in the Spectator by one of the Letters in the name of *Clio*, and in the Guardian by *a hand*; whether it was, as Tickell pretends to think, that he was unwilling to uſurp the praiſe of others, or as Steele, with far greater likelihood, inſinuates, that he could not without diſcontent impart to others any of his own. I have heard that his avidity did not ſatisfy itſelf with the air of renown, but that with great eagerneſs he laid hold on his proportion of the profits.

Many of theſe papers were written with powers truly comick, with nice diſcrimination of characters, and accurate obſervation of natural or accidental deviations from propriety; but it was not ſuppoſed that he had tried a comedy on the ſtage, till Steele, after his death, declared him the author of the *Drummer*; this however he did not know to be true by any cogent teſtimony; for when Addiſon put the play into his hands, he only told him it was the work of a *Gentleman in*

the Company; and when it was received, as is confeſſed, with cold diſapprobation, he was probably leſs willing to claim it. Tickell omitted it in his collection; but the teſtimony of Steele, and the total ſilence of any other claimant, has determined the publick to aſſign it to Addiſon, and it is now printed with his other poetry. Steele carried the *Drummer* to the playhouſe, and afterwards to the preſs, and ſold the copy for fifty guineas.

To the opinion of Steele may be added the proof ſupplied by the play itſelf, of which the characters are ſuch as Addiſon would have delineated, and the tendency ſuch as Addiſon would have promoted. That it ſhould have been ill received would raiſe wonder, did we not daily ſee the capricious diſtribution of theatrical praiſe.

He was not all this time an indifferent ſpectator of publick affairs. He wrote, as different exigencies required (in 1707), *The preſent State of the War, and the Neceſſity of an Augmentation*; which, however judicious, being written on temporary topicks, and exhibiting no peculiar powers, has naturally ſunk

ſunk by its own weight into neglect. This cannot be ſaid of the few papers entitled *The Whig Examiner*, in which is exhibited all the force of gay malevolence and humorous ſatire. Of this paper, which juſt appeared and expired, Swift remarks, with exultation, that *it is now down among the dead men*. He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed. Every reader of every party, ſince perſonal malice is paſt, and the papers which once inflamed the nation are read only as effuſions of wit, muſt wiſh for more of the *Whig Examiners*; for on no occaſion was the genius of Addiſon more vigorouſly exerted, and on none did the ſuperiority of his wit more evidently appear. His *Trial of Count Tariff*, written to expoſe the Treaty of Commerce with France, lived no longer than the queſtion that produced it.

Not long afterwards an attempt was made to revive the *Spectator*, at a time indeed by no means favourable to literature, when the ſucceſſion of a new family to the throne filled the nation with anxiety, diſcord, and confuſion; and either the turbulence of the times, or the ſatiety of the readers, put a ſtop

to

to the publication, after an experiment of eighty numbers, which were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, perhaps more valuable than any one of thoſe that went before it: Addiſon produced more than a fourth part, and the other contributors are by no means unworthy of appearing as his aſſociates. The time that had paſſed during the ſuſpenſion of the *Spectator*, though it had not leſſened his power of humour, ſeems to have increaſed his diſpoſition to ſerioufneſs: the proportion of his religious to his comick papers is greater than in the former ſeries.

The *Spectator*, from its recommencement, was publiſhed only three times a week; and no diſcriminative marks were added to the papers. To Addiſon Tickell has aſcribed twenty-three *.

The *Spectator* had many contributors; and Steele, whoſe negligence kept him always in a hurry, when it was his turn to furniſh a paper, called loudly for the Letters, of which

* Numb. 556. 557. 558. 559. 561. 562. 565. 567. 568. 569. 571. 574. 575. 579. 580. 582. 583. 584. 585. 590. 592. 598. 600.

Addiſon,

Addiſon, whoſe materials were more, made little uſe; having recourſe to ſketches and hints, the product of his former ſtudies, which he now reviewed and completed: among theſe are named by Tickell the *Eſſays* on *Wit*, thoſe on the *Pleaſures* of the *Imagination*, and the *Criticiſm* on *Milton*.

When the Houſe of Hanover took poſſeſſion of the throne, it was reaſonable to expect that the zeal of Addiſon would be ſuitably rewarded. Before the arrival of king George, he was made ſecretary to the regency, and was required by his office to ſend notice to Hanover that the Queen was dead, and that the throne was vacant. To do this would not have been difficult to any man but Addiſon, who was ſo overwhelmed with the greatneſs of the event, and ſo diſtracted by choice of expreſſion, that the lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticiſm, called Mr. Southwell, a clerk in the houſe, and ordered him to diſpatch the meſſage. Southwell readily told what was neceſſary, in the common ſtyle of buſineſs, and valued himſelf upon having done what was too hard for Addiſon.

He

He was better qualified for the *Freeholder*, a paper which he publiſhed twice a week, from Dec. 23, 1715, to the middle of the next year. This was undertaken in defence of the eſtabliſhed government, ſometimes with argument, ſometimes with mirth. In argument he had many equals; but his humour was ſingular and matchleſs. Bigotry itſelf muſt be delighted with the Tory-Fox-hunter.

There are however ſome ſtrokes leſs elegant, and leſs decent; ſuch as the Pretender's Journal, in which one topick of ridicule is his poverty. This mode of abuſe had been employed by Milton againſt king Charles II.

— — — Jacobæi.
Centum exulantis viſcera Marſupii regis.

And Oldmixon delights to tell of ſome alderman of London, that he had more money than the exiled princes; but that which might be expected from Milton's ſavageneſs, or Oldmixon's meanneſs, was not ſuitable to the delicacy of Addiſon.

Steele thought the humour of the *Freeholder* too nice and gentle for ſuch noiſy

10 times;

times; and is reported to have ſaid that the miniſtry made uſe of a lute, when they ſhould have called for a trumpet.

This year * he married the counteſs dowager of Warwick, whom he had ſolicited by a very long and anxious courtſhip, perhaps with behaviour not very unlike that of Sir Roger to his diſdainful widow; and who, I am afraid, diverted herſelf often by playing with his paſſion. He is ſaid to have firſt known her by becoming tutor to her ſon †, "He formed," ſaid Tonſon, "the deſign "of getting that lady, from the time when "he was firſt recommended into the family." In what part of his life he obtained the recommendation, or how long, and in what manner he lived in the family, I know not. His advances at firſt were certainly timorous, but grew bolder as his reputation and influence increaſed; till at laſt the lady was perſuaded to marry him, on terms much like thoſe on which a Turkiſh princeſs is eſpouſed, to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, "Daughter, I give thee this man for thy

* Auguſt 2, 1716. † Spence.

"ſlave."

"ſlave." The marriage, if uncontradicted report can be credited, made no addition to his happineſs; it neither found them nor made them equal. She always remembered her own rank, and thought herſelf entitled to treat with very little ceremony the tutor of her ſon. Rowe's ballad of the *Deſpairing Shepherd* is ſaid to have been written, either before or after marriage, upon this memorable pair; and it is certain that Addiſon has left behind him no encouragement for ambitious love.

The year after (1717) he roſe to his higheſt elevation, being made ſecretary of ſtate. For this employment he might be juſtly ſuppoſed qualified by long practice of buſineſs, and by his regular aſcent through other offices; but expectation is often diſappointed: it is univerſally confeſſed that he was unequal to the duties of his place. In the houſe of commons he could not ſpeak, and therefore was uſeleſs to the defence of the government. In the office, ſays Pope *, he could not iſſue an order without loſing his time in queſt of fine expreſſions. What he gained

* Spence.

in

in rank, he loſt in credit; and, finding by experience his own inability, was forced to ſolicit his diſmiſſion, with a penſion of fifteen hundred pounds a year. His friends palliated this relinquiſhment, of which both friends and enemies knew the true reaſon, with an account of declining health, and the neceſſity of receſs and quiet.

He now returned to his vocation, and began to plan literary occupations for his future life. He purpoſed a tragedy on the death of Socrates; a ſtory of which, as Tickell remarks, the baſis is narrow, and to which I know not how love could have been appended. There would however have been no want either of virtue in the ſentiments, or elegance in the language.

He engaged in a nobler work, a defence of the *Chriſtian Religion*, of which part was publiſhed after his death; and he deſigned to have made a new poetical verſion of the Pſalms

Theſe pious compoſitions Pope imputed * to a ſelfiſh motive, upon the credit, as he

* Spence.

owns, of Tonſon; who having quarrelled with Addiſon, and not loving him, ſaid, that, when he laid down the ſecretary's office, he intended to take orders, and obtain a biſhoprick; *for*, ſaid he, *I always thought him a prieſt in his heart.*

That Pope ſhould have thought this conjecture of Tonſon worth remembrance is a proof, but indeed ſo far as I have found, the only proof, that he retained ſome malignity from their ancient rivalry. Tonſon pretended but to gueſs it; no other mortal ever ſuſpected it; and Pope might have reflected, that a man who had been ſecretary of ſtate, in the miniſtry of Sunderland, knew a nearer way to a biſhoprick than by defending Religion, or tranſlating the Pſalms.

It is related that he had once a deſign to make an Engliſh Dictionary, and that he conſidered Dr. Tillotſon as the writer of higheſt authority. There was formerly ſent to me by Mr. Locker, clerk of the Leatherſellers Company, who was eminent for curioſity and literature, a collection of examples ſelected from Tillotſon's works, as Locker ſaid, by Addiſon. It came too late to be of uſe, ſo I inſpected it but ſlightly, and remember it

it indiſtinctly. I thought the paſſages too ſhort.

Addiſon however did not conclude his life in peaceful ſtudies; but relapſed, when he was near his end, to a political queſtion.

It ſo happened that (1718-19) a controverſy was agitated, with great vehemence, between thoſe friends of long continuance, Addiſon and Steele. It may be aſked, in the language of Homer, what power or what cauſe could ſet them at variance. The ſubject of their diſpute was of great importance. The earl of Sunderland propoſed an act called the *Peerage Bill*, by which the number of peers ſhould be fixed, and the king reſtrained from any new creation of nobility, unleſs when an old family ſhould be extinct. To this the lords would naturally agree; and the king, who was yet little acquainted with his own prerogative, and, as is now well known, almoſt indifferent to the poſſeſſions of the Crown, had been perſuaded to conſent. The only difficulty was found among the commons, who were not likely to approve the perpetual excluſion of themſelves

and their poſterity. The bill therefore was eagerly oppoſed, and among others by Sir Robert Walpole, whoſe ſpeech was publiſhed.

The lords might think their dignity diminiſhed by improper advancements, and particularly by the introduction of twelve new peers at once, to produce a majority of Tories in the laſt reign; an act of authority violent enough, yet certainly legal, and by no means to be compared with that contempt of national right, with which ſome time afterwards, by the inſtigation of Whiggiſm, the commons, choſen by the people for three years, choſe themſelves for ſeven. But, whatever might be the diſpoſition of the lords, the people had no wiſh to increaſe their power. The tendency of the bill, as Steele obſerved in a letter to the earl of Oxford, was to introduce an Ariſtocracy; for a majority of the houſe of lords, ſo limited, would have been deſpotick and irreſiſtible.

To prevent this ſubverſion of the ancient eſtabliſhment, Steele, whoſe pen readily ſeconded his political paſſions, endeavoured to alarm the nation by a pamphlet called *The Plebeian*;

Plebeian; to this an anſwer was publiſhed by Addiſon, under the title of *The Old Whig*, in which it is not diſcovered that Steele was then known to be the advocate for the commons. Steele replied by a ſecond *Plebeian*; and, whether by ignorance or by courteſy, confined himſelf to his queſtion, without any perſonal notice of his opponent. Nothing hitherto was committed againſt the laws of friendſhip, or proprieties of decency; but controvertiſts cannot long retain their kindneſs for each other. The *Old Whig* anſwered the *Plebeian*, and could not forbear ſome contempt of 'little *Dicky*, whoſe trade it was to write pamphlets.' Dicky however did not loſe his ſettled veneration for his friend; but contented himſelf with quoting ſome lines of Cato, which were at once detection and reproof. The bill was laid aſide during that ſeſſion, and Addiſon died before the next, in which its commitment was rejected by two hundred ſixty-five to one hundred ſeventy-ſeven.

Every reader ſurely muſt regret that theſe two illuſtrious friends, after ſo many years paſt in confidence and endearment, in unity

of intereſt, conformity of opinion, and fellowſhip of ſtudy, ſhould finally part in acrimonious oppoſition. Such a controverſy was *Bellum pluſquam civile*, as Lucan expreſſes it. Why could not faction find other advocates? But, among the uncertainties of the human ſtate, we are doomed to number the inſtability of friendſhip.

Of this diſpute I have little knowledge but from the *Biographia Britannica*. The *Old Whig* is not inſerted in Addiſon's works, nor is it mentioned by Tickell in his Life; why it was omitted the biographers doubtleſs give the true reaſon; the fact was too recent, and thoſe who had been heated in the contention were not yet cool.

The neceſſity of complying with times, and of ſparing perſons, is the great impediment of biography. Hiſtory may be formed from permanent monuments and records; but Lives can only be written from perſonal knowledge, which is growing every day leſs, and in a ſhort time is loſt for ever. What is known can ſeldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known.

The

The delicate features of the mind, the nice diſcriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct, are ſoon obliterated; and it is ſurely better that caprice, obſtinacy, frolick, and folly, however they might delight in the deſcription, ſhould be ſilently forgotten, than that, by wanton merriment and unſeaſonable detection, a pang ſhould be given to a widow, a daughter, a brother, or a friend. As the proceſs of theſe narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin to feel myſelf *walking upon aſhes under which the fire is not extinguiſhed*, and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to ſay *nothing that is falſe, than all that is true.*

The end of this uſeful life was now approaching.—Addiſon had for ſome time been oppreſſed by ſhortneſs of breath, which was now aggravated by a dropſy; and, finding his danger preſſing, he prepared to die conformably to his own precepts and profeſſions.

During this lingering decay, he ſent, as Pope relates *, a meſſage by the earl of War-

* Spence.

wick to Mr. Gay, deſiring to ſee him: Gay, who had not viſited him for ſome time before, obeyed the ſummons, and found himſelf received with great kindneſs. The purpoſe for which the interview had been ſolicited was then diſcovered: Addiſon told him, that he had injured him; but that, if he recovered, he would recompenſe him. What the injury was he did not explain, nor did Gay ever know; but ſuppoſed that ſome preferment deſigned for him, had, by Addiſon's intervention, been withheld.

Lord Warwick was a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of looſe opinions. Addiſon, for whom he did not want reſpect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him; but his arguments and expoſtulations had no effect. One experiment, however, remained to be tried: when he found his life near its end, he directed the young lord to be called; and when he deſired, with great tenderneſs, to hear his laſt injunctions, told him, *I have ſent for you that you may ſee how a Chriſtian can die.* What effect this awful ſcene had on the earl I know not; he died himſelf in a ſhort time.

In Tickell's excellent Elegy on his friend are theſe lines;

He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die.

In which he alludes to this moving interview, as he told Dr. Young, to whom he related it.

Having given directions to Mr. Tickell for the publication of his works, and dedicated them on his death-bed to his friend Mr. Craggs, he died June 17, 1719, at Holland-houſe, leaving no child but a daughter.

Of his virtue it is a ſufficient teſtimony, that the reſentment of party has tranſmitted no charge of any crime. He was not one of thoſe who are praiſed only after death; for his merit was ſo generally acknowledged, that Swift, having obſerved that his election paſſed without a conteſt, adds, that if he had propoſed himſelf for king, he would hardly have been refuſed.

His

His zeal for his party did not extinguiſh his kindneſs for the merit of his opponents: when he was ſecretary in Ireland, he refuſed to intermit his acquaintance with Swift.

Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is ſo often mentioned as that timorous or ſullen taciturnity, which his friends called modeſty by too mild a name. Steele mentions, with great tenderneſs, "that remarkable baſhfulneſs, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit;" and tells us, that "his abilities were covered only by modeſty, which doubles the beauties which are ſeen, and gives credit and eſteem to all that are concealed." Cheſterfield affirms, that "Addiſon was the moſt timorous and aukward man that he ever ſaw." And Addiſon, ſpeaking of his own deficience in converſation, uſed to ſay, of himſelf, that, with reſpect to intellectual wealth, "he could draw bills for a thouſand pounds, "though he had not a guinea in his "pocket."

That he wanted current coin for ready payment, and by that want was often obſtructed

ſtructed and diſtreſſed; that he was oppreſſed by an improper and ungraceful timidity, every teſtimony concurs to prove; but Cheſterfield's repreſentation is doubtleſs hyperbolical. That man cannot be ſuppoſed very unexpert in the arts of converſation and practice of life, who, without fortune or alliance, by his uſefulneſs and dexterity, became ſecretary of ſtate; and who died at forty-ſeven, after having not only ſtood long in the higheſt rank of wit and literature, but filled one of the moſt important offices of ſtate.

The time in which he lived, had reaſon to lament his obſtinacy of ſilence; "for he "was," ſays Steele, "above all men in "that talent called humour, and enjoyed "it in ſuch perfection, that I have often re-"flected, after a night ſpent with him "apart from all the world, that I had had "the pleaſure of converſing with an inti-"mate acquaintance of Terence and Catul-"lus, who had all their wit and nature, "heightened with humour more exquiſite "and delightful than any other man ever "poſſeſſed." This is the fondneſs of a friend; let us hear what is told us by a rival.

Addiſon's

"Addiſon's converſation*," ſays Pope, "had "ſomething in it more charming than I have "found in any other man. But this was "only when familiar: before ſtrangers, or "perhaps a ſingle ſtranger, he preſerved his "dignity by a ſtiff ſilence."

This modeſty was by no means inconſiſtent with a very high opinion of his own merit. He demanded to be the firſt name in modern wit; and, with Steele to echo him, uſed to depreciate Dryden, whom Pope and Congreve defended againſt them†. There is no reaſon to doubt that he ſuffered too much pain from the prevalence of Pope's poetical reputation; nor is it without ſtrong reaſon ſuſpected, that by ſome diſingenuous acts he endeavoured to obſtruct it; Pope was not the only man whom he inſidiouſly injured, though the only man of whom he could be afraid.

His own powers were ſuch as might have ſatisfied him with conſcious excellence. Of very extenſive learning he has indeed given

* Spence. † Tonſon and Spence.

no

no proofs. He ſeems to have had ſmall acquaintance with the ſciences, and to have read little except Latin and French; but of the Latin poets his *Dialogues on Medals* ſhew that he had peruſed the works with great diligence and ſkill. The abundance of his own mind left him little need of adventitious ſentiments; his wit always could ſuggeſt what the occaſion demanded. He had read with critical eyes the important volume of human life, and knew the heart of man from the depths of ſtratagem to the ſurface of affectation.

What he knew he could eaſily communicate. "This," ſays Steele, "was particular "in this writer, that, when he had taken "his reſolution, or made his plan for what "he deſigned to write, he would walk about "a room, and dictate it into language with "as much freedom and eaſe as any one could "write it down, and attend to the coherence "and grammar of what he dictated."

Pope*, who can be leſs ſuſpected of favouring his memory, declares that he wrote

* Spence.

ery

very fluently, but was ſlow and ſcrupulous in correcting; that many of his Spectators were written very faſt, and ſent immediately to the preſs; and that it ſeemed to be for his advantage not to have time for much reviſal.

"He would alter," ſays Pope, "any "thing to pleaſe his friends, before publi- "cation; but would not retouch his pieces "afterwards: and I believe not one word "in Cato, to which I made an objection, "was ſuffered to ſtand."

The laſt line of Cato is Pope's, having been originally written

And, oh! 'twas this that ended Cato's life.

Pope might have made more objections to the ſix concluding lines. In the firſt couplet the words *from hence* are improper; and the ſecond line is taken from Dryden's Virgil. Of the next couplet, the firſt verſe being included in the ſecond, is therefore uſeleſs; and in the third *Diſcord* is made to produce *Strife*.

Of the courſe of Addiſon's familiar day*, before his marriage, Pope has given a detail. He had in the houſe with him Budgell, and perhaps Philips. His chief companions were Steele, Budgell, Philips, Carey, Davenant, and colonel Brett. With one or other of theſe he always breakfaſted. He ſtudied all morning; then dined at a tavern, and went afterwards to Button's.

Button had been a ſervant in the counteſs of Warwick's family, who, under the patronage of Addiſon, kept a coffee-houſe on the ſouth-ſide of Ruſſel-ſtreet, about two doors from Covent-garden. Here it was that the wits of that time uſed to aſſemble. It is ſaid, that when Addiſon had ſuffered any vexation from the counteſs, he withdrew the company from Button's houſe.

From the coffee-houſe he went again to a tavern, where he often ſat late, and drank too much wine. In the bottle, diſcontent ſeeks for comfort, cowardice for courage, and baſhfulneſs for confidence. It is not

* Spence.

unlikely

unlikely that Addiſon was firſt ſeduced to exceſs by the manumiſſion which he obtained from the ſervile timidity of his ſober hours. He that feels oppreſſion from the preſence of thoſe to whom he knows himſelf ſuperior, will deſire to ſet looſe his powers of converſation; and who, that ever aſked ſuccour from Bacchus, was able to preſerve himſelf from being enſlaved by his auxiliary?

Among thoſe friends it was that Addiſon diſplayed the elegance of his colloquial accompliſhments, which may eaſily be ſuppoſed ſuch as Pope repreſents them. The remark of Mandeville, who, when he had paſſed an evening in his company, declared that he was a parſon in a tye-wig, can detract little from his character; he was always reſerved to ſtrangers, and was not incited to uncommon freedom by a character like that of Mandeville.

From any minute knowledge of his familiar manners, the intervention of ſixty years has now debarred us. Steele once promiſed Congreve and the publick a complete deſcription of his character; but the promiſes

of authors are like the vows of lovers. Steele thought no more on his deſign, or thought on it with anxiety that at laſt diſguſted him, and left his friend in the hands of Tickell.

His works will ſupply ſome information. It appears from his various pictures of the world, that, with all his baſhfulneſs, he had converſed with many diſtinct claſſes of men, had ſurveyed their ways with very diligent obſervation, and marked with great acuteneſs the effects of different modes of life. He was a man in whoſe preſence nothing reprehenſible was out of danger; quick in diſcerning whatever was wrong or ridiculous, and not unwilling to expoſe it. *There are*, ſays Steele, *in his writings many oblique ſtrokes upon ſome of the wittieſt men of the age* His delight was more to excite merriment than deteſtation, and he detects follies rather than crimes.

If any judgement be made, from his books, of his moral character, nothing will be found but purity and excellence. Knowledge of mankind indeed, leſs extenſive than that of Addiſon, will ſhew, that to write, and

to live, are very different. Many who praiſe virtue, do no more than praiſe it. Yet it is reaſonable to believe that Addiſon's profeſſions and practice were at no great variance, ſince, amidſt that ſtorm of faction in which moſt of his life was paſſed, though his ſtation made him conſpicuous, and his activity made him formidable, the character given him by his friends was never contradicted by his enemies: of thoſe with whom intereſt or opinion united him, he had not only the eſteem, but the kindneſs; and of others, whom the violence of oppoſition drove againſt him, though he might loſe the love, he retained the reverence.

It is juſtly obſerved by Tickell, that he employed wit on the ſide of virtue and religion. He not only made the proper uſe of wit himſelf, but taught it to others; and from his time it has been generally ſubſervient to the cauſe of reaſon and of truth. He has diſſipated the prejudice that had long connected gaiety with vice, and eaſineſs of manners with laxity of principles. He has reſtored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be aſhamed. This is an elevation

vation of literary character, *above all Greek, above all Roman fame.* No greater felicity can genius attain than that of having purified intellectual pleaſure, ſeparated mirth from indecency, and wit from licentiouſneſs; of having taught a ſucceſſion of writers to bring elegance and gaiety to the aid of goodneſs; and, if I may uſe expreſſions yet more awful, of having *turned many to righteouſneſs.*

ADDISON, in his life, and for ſome time afterwards, was conſidered by the greater part of readers as ſupremely excelling both in poetry and criticiſm. Part of his reputation may be probably aſcribed to the advancement of his fortune: when, as Swift obſerves, he became a ſtateſman, and ſaw poets waiting at his levee, it is no wonder that praiſe was accumulated upon him. Much likewiſe may be more honourably aſcribed to his perſonal character: he who, if he had claimed it, might have obtained the diadem, was not likely to be denied the laurel.

But time quickly puts an end to artificial and accidental fame; and Addiſon is to paſs through futurity protected only by his genius. Every name which kindneſs or intereſt once raiſed too high, is in danger, leſt the next age ſhould, by the vengeance of criticiſm, ſink it in the ſame proportion. A great writer has lately ſtyled him *an indifferent poet, and a worſe critick.*

His poetry is firſt to be conſidered; of which it muſt be confeſſed that it has not often thoſe felicities of diction which give luſtre to ſentiments, or that vigour of ſentiment that animates diction: there is little of ardour, vehemence, or tranſport; there is very rarely the awfulneſs of grandeur, and not very often the ſplendour of elegance. He thinks juſtly; but he thinks faintly. This is his general character; to which, doubtleſs, many ſingle paſſages will furniſh exceptions.

Yet, if he ſeldom reaches ſupreme excellence, he rarely ſinks into dulneſs, and is ſtill more rarely entangled in abſurdity. He did not truſt his powers enough to be negli-

gent. There is in moſt of his compoſitions a calmneſs and equability, deliberate and cautious, ſometimes with little that delights, but ſeldom with any thing that offends.

Of this kind ſeem to be his poems to Dryden, to Somers, and to the King. His ode on St. Cecilia has been imitated by Pope, and has ſomething in it of Dryden's vigour. Of his Account of the Engliſh Poets, he uſed to ſpeak as a *poor thing* *; but it is not worſe than his uſual ſtrain. He has ſaid, not very judiciouſly, in his character of Waller:

Thy verſe could ſhew ev'n Cromwell's innocence,
And compliment the ſtorms that bore him hence.
O! had thy Muſe not come an age too ſoon,
But ſeen great Naſſau on the Britiſh throne,
How had his triumph glitter'd in thy page!—

What is this but to ſay that he who could compliment Cromwell had been the proper poet for king William? Addiſon however never printed the piece.

The Letter from Italy has been always praiſed, but has never been praiſed beyond

* Spence.

its merit. It is more correct, with leſs appearance of labour, and more elegant, with leſs ambition of ornament, than any other of his poems. There is however one broken metaphor, of which notice may properly be taken:

> Fir'd with that name—
> I bridle in my ſtruggling Muſe with pain,
> That longs to launch into a nobler ſtrain.

To *bridle* a *goddeſs* is no very delicate idea; but why muſt ſhe be *bridled?* becauſe ſhe *longs to launch*; an act which was never hindered by a *bridle:* and whither will ſhe *launch?* into a *nobler ſtrain.* She is in the firſt line a *horſe*, in the ſecond a *boat*; and the care of the poet is to keep his *horſe* or his *boat* from *ſinging.*

The next compoſition is the faſt-famed Campaign, which Dr. Warton has termed a *Gazette in Rhyme*, with harſhneſs not often uſed by the good-nature of his criticiſm. Before a cenſure ſo ſevere is admitted, let us conſider that War is a frequent ſubject of Poetry, and then enquire who has deſcribed it with more juſtneſs and force. Many of our

our own writers tried their powers upon this year of victory, yet Addiſon's is confeſſedly the beſt performance; his poem is the work of a man not blinded by the duſt of learning: his images are not borrowed merely from books. The ſuperiority which he confers upon his hero is not perſonal proweſs, and *mighty bone*, but deliberate intrepidity, a calm command of his paſſions, and the power of conſulting his own mind in the midſt of danger. The rejection and contempt of fiction is rational and manly.

It may be obſerved that the laſt line is imitated by Pope;

Marlb'rough's exploits appear divinely bright—
Rais'd of themſelves, their genuine charms they boaſt,
And thoſe that paint them trueſt, praiſe them moſt.

This Pope had in his thoughts; but, not knowing how to uſe what was not his own, he ſpoiled the thought when he had borrowed it:

The well-ſung woes ſhall ſoothe my ghoſt;
He beſt can paint them who ſhall feel them moſt.

Martial exploits may be *painted*; perhaps *woes* may be *painted*; but they are ſurely not *painted* by being *well-ſung*: it is not eaſy to paint in ſong, or to ſing in colours.

No paſſage in the Campaign has been more often mentioned than the ſimile of the Angel, which is ſaid in the Tatler to be *one of the nobleſt thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man*, and is therefore worthy of attentive conſideration. Let it be firſt enquired whether it be at laſt a ſimile. A poetical ſimile is the diſcovery of likeneſs between two actions, in their general nature diſſimilar, or of cauſes terminating by different operations in ſome reſemblance of effect. But the mention of another like conſequence from a like cauſe, or of a like performance by a like agency, is not a ſimile, but an exemplification. It is not a ſimile to ſay that the Thames waters fields as the Po waters fields; or that as Hecla vomits flames in Iceland, ſo Ætna vomits flames in Sicily. When Horace ſays of Pindar, that he pours his violence and rapidity of verſe, as a river ſwoln with rain ruſhes from the mountain; or of himſelf, that his genius wanders in queſt of poetical

poetical decorations, as the bee wanders to collect honey; he, in either caſe, produces a ſimile; the mind is impreſſed with the reſemblance of things generally unlike, as unlike as intellect and body. But if Pindar had been deſcribed as writing with the copiouſneſs and grandeur of Homer, or Horace had told that he reviewed and finiſhed his own poetry with the ſame care as Iſocrates poliſhed his orations, inſtead of ſimilitude he would have exhibited almoſt identity; he would have given the ſame portraits with different names. In this poem, when the Engliſh are repreſented as gaining a fortified paſs, by repetition of attack and perſeverance of reſolution; their obſtinacy of courage, and vigour of onſet, is well illuſtrated by the ſea that breaks, with inceſſant battery, the dikes of Holland. This is a ſimile: but when Addiſon, having celebrated the beauty of Marlborough's perſon, tells us that *Achilles thus was formed with every grace*, here is no ſimile, but a mere exemplification. A ſimile may be compared to lines converging at a point, and is more excellent as the lines approach from greater diſtance: an exemplification may be conſidered as two parallel lines which run

run on together without approximation, never far ſeparated, and never joined.

Marlborough is ſo like the angel in the poem, that the action of both is almoſt the ſame, and performed by both in the ſame manner. Marlborough *teaches the battle to rage*; the angel *directs the ſtorm*: Marlborough is *unmoved in peaceful thought*; the angel is *calm and ſerene*: Marlborough ſtands *unmoved amidſt the ſhock of hoſts*; the angel rides *calm in the whirlwind*. The lines on Marlborough are juſt and noble; but the ſimile gives almoſt the ſame images a ſecond time.

But perhaps this thought, though hardly a ſimile, was remote from vulgar conceptions, and required great labour of reſearch, or dexterity of application. Of this, Dr. Madden, a name which Ireland ought to honour, once gave me his opinion. *If I had ſet*, ſaid he, *ten ſchool-boys to write on the battle of* Blenheim, *and eight had brought me the Angel, I ſhould not have been ſurpriſed.*

The opera of Roſamond, though it is ſeldom mentioned, is one of the firſt of Addiſon's

ſon's compoſitions. The ſubject is well-choſen, the fiction is pleaſing, and the praiſe of Marlborough, for which the ſcene gives an opportunity, is, what perhaps every human excellence muſt be, the product of good-luck improved by genius. The thoughts are ſometimes great, and ſometimes tender; the verſification is eaſy and gay. There is doubtleſs ſome advantage in the ſhortneſs of the lines, which there is little temptation to load with expletive epithets. The dialogue ſeems commonly better than the ſongs. The two comick characters of Sir Truſty and Gride-line, though of no great value, are yet ſuch as the poet intended. Sir Truſty's account of the death of Roſamond is, I think, too groſsly abſurd. The whole drama is airy and elegant; engaging in its proceſs, and pleaſing in its concluſion. If Addiſon had cultivated the lighter parts of poetry, he would probably have excelled.

The tragedy of Cato, which, contrary to the rule obſerved in ſelecting the works of other poets, has by the weight of its character forced its way into the late collection, is unqueſtionably the nobleſt production of Addiſon's

diſon's genius. Of a work ſo much read, it is difficult to ſay any thing new. About things on which the publick thinks long, it commonly attains to think right; and of Cato it has been not unjuſtly determined, that it is rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a ſucceſſion of juſt ſentiments in elegant language, than a repreſentation of natural affections, or of any ſtate probable or poſſible in human life. Nothing here *excites or aſſwages emotion*; here is *no magical power of raiſing phantaſtick terror or wild anxiety*. The events are expected without ſolicitude, and are remembered without joy or ſorrow. Of the agents we have no care: we conſider not what they are doing, or what they are ſuffering; we wiſh only to know what they have to ſay. Cato is a being above our ſolicitude; a man of whom the gods take care, and whom we leave to their care with heedleſs confidence. To the reſt, neither gods nor men can have much attention; for there is not one amongſt them that ſtrongly attracts either affection or eſteem. But they are made the vehicles of ſuch ſentiments and ſuch expreſſion, that there is ſcarcely a ſcene in the play which the reader

reader does not wiſh to impreſs upon his memory.

When Cato was ſhewn to Pope *, he adviſed the author to print it, without any theatrical exhibition; ſuppoſing that it would be read more favourably than heard. Addiſon declared himſelf of the ſame opinion; but urged the importunity of his friends for its appearance on the ſtage. The emulation of parties made it ſucceſsful beyond expectation, and its ſucceſs has introduced or confirmed among us the uſe of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philoſophy.

The univerſality of applauſe, however it might quell the cenſure of common mortals, had no other effect than to harden Dennis in fixed diſlike; but his diſlike was not merely capricious. He found and ſhewed many faults: he ſhewed them indeed with anger, but he found them with acuteneſs, ſuch as ought to reſcue his criticiſm from oblivion; though, at laſt, it will have no other life than it derives from the work which it endeavours to oppreſs.

* Spence.

Why

Why he pays no regard to the opinion of the audience, he gives his reaſon, by remarking, that

" A deference is to be paid to a general ap-
" plauſe, when it appears that that applauſe
" is natural and ſpontaneous; but that little
" regard is to be had to it, when it is affected
" and artificial. Of all the tragedies which
" in his memory have had vaſt and violent
" runs, not one has been excellent, few have
" been tolerable, moſt have been ſcandalous.
" When a poet writes a tragedy, who knows
" he has judgement, and who feels he has
" genius, that poet preſumes upon his own
" merit, and ſcorns to make a cabal. That
" people come coolly to the repreſentation of
" ſuch a tragedy, without any violent expec-
" tation, or deluſive imagination, or invinci-
" ble prepoſſeſſion; that ſuch an audience is
" liable to receive the impreſſions which the
" poem ſhall naturally make in them, and to
" judge by their own reaſon, and their own
" judgements, and that reaſon and judge-
" ment are calm and ſerene, not formed by
" nature to make proſelytes, and to controul
" and

" and lord it over the imaginations of others.
" But that when an author writes a tragedy,
" who knows he has neither genius nor
" judgement, he has recourſe to the making
" a party, and he endeavours to make up in
" induſtry what is wanting in talent, and to
" ſupply by poetical craft the abſence of po-
" etical art: that ſuch an author is humbly
" contented to raiſe men's paſſions by a plot
" without doors, ſince he deſpairs of doing it
" by that which he brings upon the ſtage.
" That party and paſſion, and prepoſſeſſion,
" are clamorous and tumultuous things, and
" ſo much the more clamorous and tumul-
" tuous by how much the more erroneous:
" that they domineer and tyrannize over the
" imaginations of perſons who want judge-
" ment, and ſometimes too of thoſe who
" have it; and, like a fierce and outrageous
" torrent, bear down all oppoſition before
" them."

He then condemns the neglect of poetical juſtice; which is always one of his favourite principles.

" 'Tis certainly the duty of every tragick
" poet, by the exact diſtribution of poetical

" juſtice, to imitate the Divine Diſpenſation,
" and to inculcate a particular Providence.
" 'Tis true, indeed, upon the ſtage of the
" world, the wicked ſometimes proſper, and
" the guiltleſs ſuffer. But that is permitted
" by the Governor of the world, to ſhew,
" from the attribute of his infinite juſtice,
" that there is a compenſation in futurity, to
" prove the immortality of the human ſoul,
" and the certainty of future rewards and
" puniſhments. But the poetical perſons in
" tragedy exiſt no longer than the reading, or
" the repreſentation; the whole extent of
" their entity is circumſcribed by thoſe; and
" therefore, during that reading or repreſen-
" tation, according to their merits or deme-
" rits, they muſt be puniſhed or rewarded.
" If this is not done, there is no impartial
" diſtribution of poetical juſtice, no inſtruc-
" tive lecture of a particular Providence, and
" no imitation of the Divine Diſpenſation.
" And yet the author of this tragedy does not
" only run counter to this, in the fate of his
" principal character; but every where,
" throughout it, makes virtue ſuffer, and vice
" triumph: for not only Cato is vanquiſhed
" by Cæſar, but the treachery and perfi-
" diouſneſs

" dioriſneſs of Syphax prevails over the ho-
" neſt ſimplicity and the credulity of Juba;
" and the ſly ſubtlety and diſſimulation of
" Portius over the generous frankneſs and
" open-heartedneſs of Marcus."

Whatever pleaſure there may be in ſeeing crimes puniſhed and virtue rewarded, yet, ſince wickedneſs often proſpers in real life, the poet is certainly at liberty to give it proſperity on the ſtage. For if poetry has an imitation of reality, how are its laws broken by exhibiting the world in its true form? The ſtage may ſometimes gratify our wiſhes; but, if it be truly the *mirror of life*, it ought to ſhew us ſometimes what we are to expect.

Dennis objects to the characters that they are not natural, or reaſonable; but as heroes and heroines are not beings that are ſeen every day, it is hard to find upon what principles their conduct ſhall be tried. It is, however, not uſeleſs to conſider what he ſays of the manner in which Cato receives the account of his ſon's death.

" Nor is the grief of Cato, in the fourth
" act, one jot more in nature than that of his

" ſon and Lucia in the third. Ca[illegible] received
" the news of his ſon's death not [illegible] with
" dry eyes, but with a ſort of ſa[illegible]faction;
" and in the ſame page ſheds tea[illegible] for the
" calamity of his country, and does the ſame
" thing in the next page upon the bare ap-
" prehenſion of the danger of his friends.
" Now, ſince the love of one's country is the
" love of one's countrymen, as I have ſhewn
" upon another occaſion, I deſire to aſk theſe
" queſtions: of all our countrymen, which
" do we love moſt, thoſe whom we know,
" or thoſe whom we know not? And of thoſe
" whom we know, which do we cheriſh
" moſt, our friends or our enemies? And of
" our friends, which are the deareſt to us?
" thoſe who are related to us, or thoſe who
" are not? And of all our relations, for
" which have we moſt tenderneſs, for thoſe
" who are near to us, or for thoſe who are
" remote? And of our near relations, which
" are the neareſt, and conſequently the deareſt
" to us, our offſpring or others? Our off-
" ſpring, moſt certainly; as nature, or in
" other words Providence, has wiſely con-
" trived for the preſervation of mankind.
" Now, does it not follow, from what has
" been

"been ſaid, that for a man to receive the "news of his ſon's death with dry eyes, and "to weep at the ſame time for the calamities "of his country, is a wretched affectation, "and a miſerable inconſiſtency? Is not that, "in plain Engliſh, to receive with dry eyes "the news of the deaths of thoſe for whoſe "ſake our country is a name ſo dear to us, "and at the ſame time to ſhed tears for thoſe "for whoſe ſakes our country is not a name "ſo dear to us?"

But this formidable aſſailant is leaſt reſiſtible when he attacks the probability of the action, and the reaſonableneſs of the plan. Every critical reader muſt remark, that Addiſon has, with a ſcrupuloſity almoſt unexampled on the Engliſh ſtage, confined himſelf in time to a ſingle day, and in place to rigorous unity: The ſcene never changes, and the whole action of the play paſſes in the great hall of Cato's houſe at Utica. Much therefore is done in the hall, for which any other place had been more fit; and this impropriety affords Dennis many hints of merriment, and opportunities of triumph. The paſſage is long; but as ſuch diſquiſitions are

not common, and the objections are skilfully formed and vigorouſly urged, thoſe who delight in critical controverſy will not think it tedious.

" Upon the departure of Portius
" nius makes but one ſoliloquy, and immedi-
" diately in comes Syphax, and then the two
" politicians are at it immediately. They
" lay their heads together, with their ſnuff-
" boxes in their hands, as Mr. Bayes has it,
" and ſeague it away. But, in the midſt of
" that wiſe ſcene, Syphax ſeems to give a ſea-
" ſonable caution to Sempronius:

" *Syph.* But is it true, Sempronius, that your
" ſenate
" Is call'd together? Gods! thou muſt be
" cautious,
" Cato has piercing eyes.

" There is a great deal of caution ſhewn in-
" deed, in meeting in a governor's own hall
" to carry on their plot againſt him. What-
" ever opinion they have of his eyes, I ſup-
" poſe they had none of his ears, or they
" would never have talked at this fooliſh rate
" ſo near:

—" Gods! thou muſt be cautious:

Oh!

"Oh! yes, very cautious: for if Cato ſhould "overhear you, and turn you off for politi- "cians, Cæſar would never take you; no, "Cæſar would never take you.

"When Cato, Act II. turns the ſenators "out of the hall, upon pretence of acquaint- "ing Juba with the reſult of their debates, "he appears to me to do a thing which is "neither reaſonable nor civil. Juba might "certainly have better been made acquainted "with the reſult of that debate in ſome pri- "vate apartment of the palace. But the "poet was driven upon this abſurdity to "make way for another; and that is, to give "Juba an opportunity to demand Marcia of "her father. But the quarrel and rage of Juba "and Syphax, in the ſame Act, the invectives "of Syphax againſt the Romans and Cato; "the advice that he gives Juba, in her fa- "ther's hall, to bear away Marcia by force; "and his brutal and clamorous rage upon his "refuſal, and at a time when Cato was ſcarce "out of ſight, and perhaps not out of hear- "ing; at leaſt, ſome of his guards or do- "meſticks muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to

" be within hearing; is a thing that is ſo " far from being probable, that it is hardly " poſſible.

" Sempronius, in the ſecond Act, comes " back once more in the ſame morning to " the governor's hall, to carry on the con- " ſpiracy with Syphax againſt the governor, " his country, and his family; which is ſo " ſtupid, that it is below the wiſdom of the " O—'s, the Mac's, and the Teague's; even " Euſtace Commins himſelf would never " have gone to Juſtice-hall, to have conſpir- " ed again the government. If officers at " Portſmouth ſhould lay their heads toge- " ther, in order to the carrying off J— G—'s " niece or daughter, would they meet in " J— G—'s hall, to carry on that conſpi- " racy? There would be no neceſſity for " their meeting there, at leaſt till they came " to the execution of their plot, becauſe there " would be other places to meet in. There " would be no probability that they ſhould " meet there, becauſe there would be places " more private and more commodious. Now " there ought to be nothing in a tragical " action but what is neceſſary or probable.

" But treaſon is not the only thing that is " carried on in this hall: that and love, and " philoſophy, take their turns in it, without " any manner of neceſſity or probability oc- " caſioned by the action, as duly and as re- " gularly, without interrupting one another, " as if there were a triple league between " them, and a mutual agreement that each " ſhould give place to and make way for the " other, in a due and orderly ſucceſſion.

" We come now to the third Act. Sem- " pronius, in this Act, comes into the gover- " nor's hall, with the leaders of the mutiny: " but as ſoon as Cato is gone, Sempronius, " who but juſt before had acted like an un- " paralleled knave, diſcovers himſelf, like " an egregious fool, to be an accomplice in " the conſpiracy.

" *Semp.* Know, villains, when ſuch paltry
" ſlaves preſume
" To mix in treaſon, if the plot ſucceeds,
" They're thrown neglected by: but if it fails,
" They're ſure to die like dogs, as you ſhall do.
" Here, take theſe factious monſters, drag them
" forth
" To ſudden death.—

" 'Tis true, indeed, the ſecond leader ſays, " there are none there but friends: but is that " poſſible at ſuch a juncture? Can a parcel " of rogues attempt to aſſaſſinate the gover- " nor of a town of war, in his own houſe, " in mid-day, and after they are diſcovered " and defea ed, can there be none near " them but friends? Is it not plain from " theſe words of Sempronius,

" Here, take theſe factious monſters, drag them " forth
" To ſudden death—

" and from the entrance of the guards upon " the word of command, that thoſe guards " were within ear-ſhot? Behold Sempronius " then palpably diſcovered. How comes it " to paſs, then, that, inſtead of being hanged " up with the reſt, he remains ſecure in the " governor's hall, and there carries on his " conſpiracy againſt the government, the " third time in the ſame day, with his old " com ade Syphax? who enters at the ſame " time that the guards are carrying away the " leaders, big with the news of the defeat " of Sempronius; though where he had his " intelligence ſo ſoon is difficult to imagine.

" And

" And now the reader may expect a very ex-
" traordinary ſcene: there is not abundance
" of ſpirit indeed, nor a great deal of paſſion,
" but there is wiſdom more than enough to
" ſupply all defects.

" *Syph.* Our firſt deſign, my friend, has prov'd
" abortive;
" Still there remains an after-game to play:
" My troops are mounted, their Numidian fteeds
" Snuff up the winds, and long to ſcour the
deſart:
" Let but Sempronius lead us in our flight,
" We'll force the gate, where Marcus keeps his
" guard,
" And hew down all that would oppoſe our
" paſſage;
" A day will bring us into Cæſar's camp.
" *Semp.* Confuſion! I have fail'd of half my
" purpoſe;
" Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind.

" Well! but though he tells us the half-
" purpoſe that he has fail'd of, he does not
" tell us the half that he has carried. But
" what does he mean by

" Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind?

" He

"she is now in her own house; and we have "neither seen her nor heard of her any "where else since the play began. But now "let us hear Syphax:

" What hinders then, but that thou find her out,
" And hurry her away by manly force?

"But what does old Syphax mean by find-"ing her out? They talk as if she were "as hard to be found as a hare in a frosty "morning.

"*Semp.* But how to gain admission?

"Oh! she is found out then, it seems.

" But how to gain admission? for access
" Is giv'n to none, but Juba and her brothers.

"But, raillery apart, why access to Juba? "For he was owned and received as a lover "neither by the father nor by the daughter. "Well! but let that pass. Syphax puts "Sempronius out of pain immediately; and, "being a Numidian, abounding in wiles, "supplies him with a stratagem for admis-"sion, that, I believe, is a non-pareille:

"*Syph.*

" *Syph.* Thou ſhalt have Juba's dreſs, and Ju-
" ba's guards;
" The doors will open, when Numidia's prince
" Seems to appear before them.

" Sempronius is, it ſeems, to paſs for Juba " in full day at Cato's houſe, where they were " both ſo very well known, by having Juba's " dreſs and his guards: as if one of the mar- " ſhals of France could paſs for the duke of " Bavaria, at noon-day, at Verſailles, by hav- " ing his dreſs and liveries. But how does " Syphax pretend to help Sempronius to " young Juba's dreſs? Does he ſerve him in " a double capacity, as general and maſter " of his wardrobe? But why Juba's guards? " For the devil of any guards has Juba ap- " peared with yet. Well! though this is a " mighty politick invention, yet, methinks, " they might have done without it: for, " ſince the advice that Syphax gave to Sem- " pronius was,

" To hurry her away by manly force,

" in my opinion, the ſhorteſt and likelieſt " way of coming at the lady was by demoliſh- " ing, inſtead of putting on an impertinent " diſguiſe to circumvent two or three ſlaves.

" But

" But Sempronius, it ſeems, is of another " opinion. He extols to the ſkies the in- " vention of old Syphax:

" *Sempr.* Heavens! what a thought was there!

" Now I appeal to the reader, if I have " not been as good as my word. Did I " not tell him, that I would lay before him " a very wiſe ſcene?

" But now let us lay before the reader " that part of the ſcenery of the Fourth Act, " which may ſhew the abſurdities which the " author has run into, through the indiſ- " creet obſervance of the Unity of Place. " I do not remember that Ariſtotle has ſaid " any thing expreſsly concerning the Unity " of Place. 'Tis true, implicitly he has " ſaid enough in the rules which he has laid " down for the Chorus. For, by making " the Chorus an eſſential part of Tragedy, " and by bringing it on the ſtage immedi- " ately after the opening of the ſcene, and " retaining it there till the very cataſtrophe, " he has ſo determined and fixed the place " of action, that it was impoſſible for an

" author on the Grecian ſtage to break
" through that unity. I am of opinion, that
" if a modern tragic poet can preſerve the
" unity of place, without deſtroying the
" probability of the incidents, 'tis always
" beſt for him to do it; becauſe, by the pre-
" ſervation of that unity, as we have taken
" notice above, he adds grace, and cleanneſs,
" and comelineſs, to the repreſentation. But
" ſince there are no expreſs rules about it,
" and we are under no compulſion to keep
" it, ſince we have no Chorus as the Grecian
" poet had; if it cannot be preſerved, with-
" out rendering the greater part of the in-
" cidents unreaſonable and abſurd, and per-
" haps ſometimes monſtrous, 'tis certainly
" better to break it.

" Now comes bully Sempronius, comically
" accoutred and equipped with his Numi-
" dian dreſs and his Numidian guards. Let
" the reader attend to him with all his ears;
" for the words of the wiſe are precious:

" *Sempr.* The deer is lodg'd, I ve track'd her
" to her covert.

" Now I would fain know why this deer
" is ſaid to be lodged, ſince we have not
" heard

" heard one word, ſince the play began, of " her being at all out of harbour: and if we " conſider the diſcourſe with which ſhe " and Lucia begin the Act, we have reaſon " to believe that they had hardly been talk- " ing of ſuch matters in the ſtreet. How- " ever, to pleaſure Sempronius, let us ſup- " poſe, for once, that the deer is lodged:

" The deer is lodg'd, I've track'd her to her " covert.

" If he had ſeen her in the open field, " what occaſion had he to track her, when " he had ſo many Numidian dogs at his " heels, which, with one halloo, he might " have ſet upon her haunches? If he did not " ſee her in the open field, how could he " poſſibly track her? If he had ſeen her in " the ſtreet, why did he not ſet upon her in " the ſtreet, ſince through the ſtreet ſhe muſt " be carried at laſt? Now here, inſtead of " having his thoughts upon his buſineſs, " and upon the preſent danger; inſtead of " meditating and contriving how he ſhall " paſs with his miſtreſs through the ſouthern " gate, where her brother Marcus is upon " the guard, and where ſhe would certainly

" prove

" prove an impediment to him, which is the " Roman word for the *baggage*; inſtead of " doing this, Sempronius is entertaining " himſelf with whimſies:

" *Sempr.* How will the young Numidian rave
" to ſee
" His miſtreſs loſt? If aught could glad my ſoul,
" Beyond th' enjoyment of ſo bright a prize,
" 'Twould be to torture that young gay Barba-
" rian.
" But hark! what noiſe? Death to my hopes,
" 'tis he,
" 'Tis Juba's ſelf! There is but one way left!
" He muſt be murder'd, and a paſſage cut
" Through thoſe his guards.

" Pray, what are *thoſe his guards?* I " thought at preſent, that Juba's guards had " been Sempronius's tools, and had been " dangling after his heels.

" But now let us ſum up all theſe abſur- " dities together. Sempronius goes at noon- " day, in Juba's clothes, and with Juba's " guards, to Cato's palace, in order to paſs " for Juba, in a place where they were " both ſo very well known: he meets " Juba

" Juba there, and reſolves to murder
" his own guards. Upon the guards appear-
" ing a little baſhful, he threatens them:

" Hah! Daſtards, do you tremble!
" Or act like men, or by you azure heav'n!

" But the guards ſtill remaining reſtive, Sem-
" pronius himſelf attacks Juba, while each
" of the guards is repreſenting Mr. Specta-
" tor's ſign of the Gaper, awed, it ſeems, and
" terrified by Sempronius's threats. Juba
" kills Sempronius, and takes his own army
" priſoners, and carries them in triumph
" away to Cato. Now I would fain know,
" if any part of Mr. Bayes's tragedy is ſo full
" of abſurdity as this?

" Upon hearing the claſh of ſwords, Lucia
" and Marcia come in. The queſtion is,
" why no men come in upon hearing the
" noiſe of ſwords in the governor's hall?
" Where was the governor himſelf? Where
" were his guards? Where were his ſer-
" vants? Such an attempt as this, ſo
" near the perſon of a governor, a place
" of war, was enough to alarm the whole
" garriſon: and yet, for almoſt half an hour

" after

" after Sempronius was killed, we find none " of thoſe appear, who were the likelieſt in " the world to be alarmed; and the noiſe of " ſwords is made to draw only two poor wo- " men thither, who were moſt certain to run " away from it. Upon Lucia and Marcia's " coming in, Lucia appears in all the ſymp- " toms of an hyſterical gentlewoman:

" *Luc.* Sure 'twas the claſh of ſwords! my trou-
" bled heart
" Is ſo caſt down, and ſunk amidſt its ſorrows,
" It throbs with fear, and akes at every ſound!

" And immediately her old whimſy returns " upon her:

" O Marcia, ſhould thy brothers, for my ſake—
" I die away with horror at the thought.

" She fancies that there can be no cutting-of- " throats, but it muſt be for her. If this is " tragical, I would fain know what is comi- " cal. Well! upon this they ſpy the body " of Sempronius; and Marcia, deluded by " the habit, it ſeems, takes him for Juba; " for, ſays ſhe,

" The face is muffled up within the garment.

" Now how a man could fight, and fall with

" his face muffled up in his garment, is, I
" think, a little hard to conceive! Beſides,
" Juba, before he killed him, knew him to
" be Sempronius. It was not by his gar-
" ment that he knew this; it was by his face
" then: his face therefore was not muffled.
" Upon ſeeing this man with the muffled
" face, Marcia falls a-raving; and, owning
" her paſſion for the ſuppoſed defunct, begins
" to make his funeral oration. Upon which
" Juba enters liſtening, I ſuppoſe on tip-toe:
" for I cannot imagine how any one can enter
" liſtening, in any other poſture. I would
" fain know how it came to paſs, that during
" all this time he had ſent nobody, not
" ſo much as a candle-ſnuffer, to take away
" the dead body of Sempronius. Well!
" but let us regard him liſtening. Having
" left his apprehenſion behind him, he, at
" firſt, applies what Marcia ſays to Sempro-
" nius. But finding at laſt, with much ado,
" that he himſelf is the happy man, he quits
" his eve-dropping, and diſcovers himſelf juſt
" time enough to prevent his being cuckol-
" ed by a dead man, of whom the moment
" before he had appeared ſo jealous; and
" greedily intercepts the kiſs, which was
" fondly

" fondly deſigned for one who could not
" be the better for it. But here I muſt aſk a
" queſtion: how comes Juba to liſten here,
" who had not liſtened before throughout
" the play? Or, how comes he to be the
" only perſon of this tragedy who liſtens,
" when love and treaſon were ſo often talked
" in ſo publick a place as a hall? I am afraid
" the author was driven upon all theſe ab-
" ſurdities only to introduce this miſerable
" miſtake of Marcia; which, after all, is
" much below the dignity of tragedy, as any
" thing is which is the effect or reſult of
" trick.

" But let us come to the ſcenery of the
" Fifth Act. Cato appears firſt upon the
" ſcene, ſitting in a thoughtful poſture; in
" his hand Plato's treatiſe on the Immortali-
" ty of the Soul, a drawn ſword on the table
" by him. Now let us conſider the place in
" which this fight is preſented to us. The
" place, forſooth, is a long hall. Let us ſup-
" poſe, that any one ſhould place himſelf in
" this poſture, in the midſt of one of our
" halls in London; that he ſhould appear
" *ſolus*, in a ſullen poſture, a drawn ſword on

" the table by him; in his hand Plato's trea-
" tiſe on the Immortality of the Soul, tranſ-
" lated lately by Bernard Lintot: I deſire
" the reader to conſider, whether ſuch a per-
" ſon as this would paſs with them, who be-
" held him for a great patriot, a great philo-
" ſopher, or a general, or for ſome whimſical
" perſon who fancied himſelf all theſe; and
" whether the people, who belonged to the
" family, would think that ſuch a perſon had
" a deſign upon their midrifs or his own?

" In ſhort, that Cato ſhould ſit long enough,
" in the aforeſaid poſture, in the midſt of this
" large hall, to read over Plato's treatiſe [illegible]
" the Immortality of the Soul, which is a lec-
" ture of two long hours; that he ſhould pro-
" poſe to himſelf to be private there upon
" that occaſion; that he ſhould be angry
" with his ſon for [illegible] there; then,
" that he ſhould leave this hall upon the
" pretence of ſleep, give himſelf the mortal
" wound in his bedchamber, and then be
" brought back into that hall to expire, pure-
" ly to ſhew his good-breeding, and ſave his
" friends the trouble of coming up to his
" bedchamber;

" bedchamber; all this appears to me to be " improbable, incredible, impoſſible."

Such is the cenſure of Dennis. There is, as Dryden expreſſes it, perhaps *too much horſe-play in his raillery*; but if his jeſts are coarſe, his arguments are ſtrong. Yet as we love better to be pleaſed than to be taught, Cato is read, and the critick is neglected.

Fluſhed with conſciouſneſs of theſe detections of abſurdity in the conduct, he afterwards attacked the ſentiments of Cato; but he [illegible] amuſed himſelf with petty cavils, and minute objections.

Of Addiſon's ſmaller poems, no particular mention is neceſſary; they have little that can employ or require a critick. The parallel of the Princes and Gods, in his verſes to Kneller, is often happy, but is too well known to be quoted.

His tranſlations, ſo far as I have compared them, want the exactneſs of a ſcholar. That he underſtood his authors cannot be doubted; but his verſions will not teach others to underſtand

derſtand them, being too licentiouſly paraphraſtical. They are however, for the moſt part, ſmooth and eaſy; and, what is the firſt excellence of a tranſlator, ſuch as may be read with pleaſure by thoſe who do not know the originals.

His poetry is poliſhed and pure; the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not ſufficiently vigorous to attain excellence. He has ſometimes a ſtriking line, or a ſhining paragraph; but in the whole he is warm rather than fervid, and ſhews more dexterity than ſtrength. He was however one of our earlieſt examples of correctneſs.

The verſification which he had learned from Dryden, he debaſed rather than refined. His rhymes are often diſſonant; in his Georgick he admits broken lines. He uſes both triplets and alexandrines, but triplets more frequently in his tranſlations than his other works. The mere ſtructure of verſes ſeems never to have engaged much of his care. But his lines are very ſmooth in Roſamond, and too ſmooth in Cato.

Addiſon

Addiſon is now to be conſidered as a critick; a name which the preſent generation is ſcarcely willing to allow him. His criticiſm is condemned as tentative or experimental, rather than ſcientifick, and he is conſidered as deciding by taſte rather than by principles.

It is not uncommon for thoſe who have grown wiſe by the labour of others, to add a little of their own, and overlook their maſters. Addiſon is now deſpiſed by ſome who perhaps would never have ſeen his defects, but by the lights which he afforded them. That he always wrote as he would think it neceſſary to write now, cannot be affirmed; his inſtructions were ſuch as the character of his readers made proper. That general knowledge which now circulates in common talk, was in his time rarely to be found. Men not profeſſing learning were not aſhamed of ignorance; and in the female world, any acquaintance with books was diſtinguiſhed only to be cenſured. His purpoſe was to infuſe literary curioſity, by gentle and unſuſpected conveyance, into the gay, the idle, and the wealthy; he there-

fore preſented knowledge in the moſt alluring form; not lofty and auſtere, but acceſſible and familiar. When he ſhewed them their defects, he ſhewed them likewiſe that they might be eaſily ſupplied. His attempt ſucceeded; enquiry was awakened, and comprehenſion expanded. An emulation of intellectual elegance was excited, and from his time to our own, life has been gradually exalted, and converſation purified and enlarged.

Dryden had, not many years before, ſcattered criticiſm over his Prefaces with very little parcimony; but, though he ſometimes condeſcended to be ſomewhat familiar, his manner was in general too ſcholaſtick for thoſe who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not eaſy to underſtand their maſter. His obſervations were framed rather for thoſe that were learning to write, than for thoſe that read only to talk.

An inſtructor like Addiſon was now wanting, whoſe remarks being ſuperficial, might be eaſily underſtood, and being juſt, might prepare the mind for more attainments.

Had

Had he preſented *Paradiſe Loſt* to the publick with all the pomp of ſyſtem and ſeverity of ſcience, he would perhaps have been admired, and the book ſtill have been neglected; but by the blandiſhments of gentleneſs and facility, he has made Milton an univerſal favourite, with whom readers of every claſs think it neceſſary to be pleaſed.

He deſcended now and then to lower diſquiſitions; and by a ſerious diſplay of the beauties of *Chevy Chaſe*, expoſed himſelf to the ridicule of Wagſtaff, who beſtowed a like pompous character on *Tom Thumb*; and to the contempt of Dennis, who, conſidering the fundamental poſition of his criticiſm, that *Chevy Chaſe* pleaſes, and ought to pleaſe, becauſe it is natural, obſerves, "that there is a way of deviating from nature, by bombaſt or tumour, which ſoars above nature, and enlarges images beyond their real bulk; by affectation, which forſakes nature in queſt of ſomething unſuitable; and by imbecillity, which degrades nature by faintneſs and diminution, by obſcuring images and weakening effects." In *Chevy Chaſe* there is not much of either bombaſt or affectation; but there is chill and lifeleſs imbecillity. The

ſtory cannot poſſibly be told in a manner that ſhall make leſs impreſſion on the mind.

Before the profound obſervers of the preſent race repoſe too ſecurely on the conſciouſneſs of their ſuperiority to Addiſon, let them conſider his Remarks on Ovid, in which may be found ſpecimens of criticiſm ſufficiently ſubtle and refined; let them peruſe likewiſe his Eſſays on *Wit*, and on the *Pleaſures of Imagination*, in which he founds art on the baſe of nature, and draws the principles of invention from diſpoſitions inherent in the mind of man, with ſkill and elegance, ſuch as his contemners will not eaſily attain.

As a deſcriber of life and manners, he muſt be allowed to ſtand perhaps the firſt of the firſt rank. His humour, which, as Steele obſerves, is peculiar to himſelf, is ſo happily diffuſed as to give the grace of novelty to domeſtick ſcenes and daily occurrences. He never *outſteps the modeſty of nature*, nor raiſes merriment or wonder by the violation of truth. His figures neither divert by diſtortion, nor amaze by aggravation. He copies life with ſo much fidelity, that

he can be hardly ſaid to invent; yet his exhibitions have an air ſo much original, that it is difficult to ſuppoſe them not merely the product of imagination.

As a teacher of wiſdom, he may be confidently followed. His religion has nothing in it enthuſiaſtick or ſuperſtitious: he appears neither weakly credulous nor wantonly ſceptical; his morality is neither dangerouſly lax, nor impracticably rigid. All the enchantment of fancy, and all the cogency of argument, are employed to recommend to the reader his real intereſt, the care of pleaſing the Author of his being. Truth is ſhewn ſometimes as the phantom of a viſion, ſometimes appears half-veiled in an allegory; ſometimes attracts regard in the robes of fancy, and ſometimes ſteps forth in the confidence of reaſon. She wears a thouſand dreſſes, and in all is pleaſing.

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

His proſe is the model of the middle ſtyle; on grave ſubjects not formal, on light occaſions not groveling; pure without ſcrupuloſity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always eaſy, without

out glowing words or pointed ſentences. Addiſon never deviates from his track to ſnatch a grace; he ſeeks no ambitious ornaments, and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected ſplendour.

It ſeems to have been his principal endeavour to avoid all harſhneſs and ſeverity of diction; he is therefore ſometimes verboſe in his tranſitions and connections, and ſometimes deſcends too much to the language of converſation; yet if his language had been leſs idiomatical, it might have loſt ſomewhat of its genuine Angliciſm. What he attempted, he performed; he is never feeble, and he did not wiſh to be energetick; he is never rapid, and he never ſtagnates. His ſentences have neither ſtudied amplitude, nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and eaſy. Whoever wiſhes to attain an Engliſh ſtyle, familiar but not coarſe, and elegant but not oſtentatious, muſt give his days and nights to the volumes of Addiſon.

HUGHES.

HUGHES.

JOHN HUGHES, the ſon of a citizen of London, and of Anne Burgeſs, of an ancient family in Wiltſhire, was born at Marlborough, July 29, 1677. He was educated at a private ſchool; and though his advances in literature are in the *Biographia* very oſtentatiouſly diſplayed, the name of his maſter is ſomewhat ungratefully concealed.

At nineteen he drew the plan of a tragedy; and paraphraſed, rather too diffuſely, the ode of Horace which begins *Integer Vitæ*. To poetry he added the ſcience of muſick, in which he ſeems to have attained conſiderable ſkill, together with the practice of deſign, or rudiments of painting.

His ſtudies did not withdraw him wholly from buſineſs, nor did buſineſs hinder him from ſtudy. He had a place in the office of ordnance, and was ſecretary to ſeveral commiſſions for purchaſing lands neceſſary to ſecure the royal docks at Chatham and Portſmouth; yet found time to acquaint himſelf with modern languages.

In 1697 he publiſhed a poem on the *Peace of Ryſwick*; and in 1699 another piece, called *The Court of Neptune*, on the return of king William, which he addreſſed to Mr. Montague, the general patron of the followers of the Muſes. The ſame year he produced a ſong on the duke of Glouceſter's birth-day.

He did not confine himſelf to poetry, but cultivated other kinds of writing with great ſucceſs; and about this time ſhewed his knowledge of human nature by an *Eſſay on the Pleaſure of being deceived*. In 1702 he publiſhed, on the death of king William, a Pindarick ode called *The Houſe of Naſſau*; and wrote another paraphraſe on the *Otium Divos* of Horace.

In

In 1703 his ode on Muſick was performed at Stationers Hall; and he wrote afterwards ſix cantatas, which were ſet to muſick by the greateſt maſter of that time, and ſeem intended to oppoſe or exclude the Italian opera, an exotick and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and always has prevailed.

His reputation was now ſo far advanced, that the publick began to pay reverence to his name; and he was ſolicited to prefix a preface to the tranſlation of *Boccalini*, a writer whoſe ſatirical vein coſt him his life in Italy; but who never, I believe, found many readers in this country, even though introduced by ſuch powerful recommendation.

He tranſlated Fontenelle's *Dialogues of the Dead*; and his verſion was perhaps read at that time, but is now neglected; for by a book not neceſſary, and owing its reputation wholly to its turn of diction, little notice can be gained but from thoſe who can enjoy the graces of the original. To the dialogues of Fontenelle he added two compoſed by himſelf;

ſelf; and, though not only an honeſt but a pious man, dedicated his work to the earl of Wharton. He judged ſkilfully enough of his own intereſt; for Wharton, when he went lord lieutenant to Ireland, offered to take Hughes with him, and eſtabliſh him; but Hughes, having hopes or promiſes from another man in power, of ſome proviſion more ſuitable to his inclination, declined Wharton's offer, and obtained nothing from the other.

He tranſlated the *Miſer* of Moliere; but never offered it to the Stage; and occaſionally amuſed himſelf with making verſions of favourite ſcenes in other plays.

Being now received as a wit among the wits, he paid his contributions to literary undertakings, and aſſiſted both the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. In 1713 he tranſlated Vertot's Hiſtory of the *Revolution of Portugal*; produced an *Ode to the Creator of the World, from the Fragments of Orpheus*; and brought upon the Stage an opera called *Calypſo and Telemachus*, intended to ſhew that the Engliſh language might be very happily adapted

adapted to muſick. This was impudently oppoſed by thoſe who were employed in the Italian opera; and, what cannot be told without indignation, the intruders had ſuch intereſt with the duke of Shrewſbury, then lord Chamberlain, who had married an Italian, as to obtain an obſtruction of the profits, though not an inhibition of the performance.

There was at this time a project formed by Tonſon for a tranſlation of the *Pharſalia*, by ſeveral hands; and Hughes engliſhed the tenth book. But this deſign, as muſt often happen where the concurrence of many is neceſſary, fell to the ground; and the whole work was afterwards performed by Rowe.

His acquaintance with the great writers of his time appears to have been very general; but of his intimacy with Addiſon there is a remarkable proof. It is told, on good authority, that *Cato* was finiſhed and played by his perſuaſion. It had long wanted the laſt act, which he was deſired by Addiſon to ſupply. If the requeſt was ſincere, it proceeded from an opinion, whatever it was, that did not laſt long; for when Hughes

came in a week to ſhew him his firſt attempt, he found half the act written by Addiſon himſelf.

He afterwards publiſhed the works of *Spenſer*, with his Life, a Gloſſary, and a Diſcourſe on Allegorical Poetry; a work for which he was well qualified, as a judge of the beauties of writing, but perhaps wanted an antiquary's knowledge of the obſolete words. He did not much revive the curioſity of the publick; for near thirty years elapſed before his edition was reprinted. The ſame year produced his *Apollo and Daphne*, of which the ſucceſs was very earneſtly promoted by Steele, who, when the rage of party did not miſguide him, ſeems to have been a man of boundleſs benevolence.

Hughes had hitherto ſuffered the mortifications of a narrow fortune; but in 1717 the lord chancellor Cowper ſet him at eaſe, by making him ſecretary to the Commiſſions of the Peace; in which he afterwards, by a particular requeſt, deſired his ſucceſſor lord Parker to continue him. He had now affluence; but ſuch is human life, that he had it when

when his declining health could neither allow him long poſſeſſion nor quick enjoyment.

His laſt work was his tragedy, *The Siege of Damaſcus*; after which *a Siege* became a popular title. This play, which ſtill continues on the Stage, and of which it is unneceſſary to add a private voice to ſuch continuance of approbation, is not acted or printed according to the author's original draught, or his ſettled intention. He had made *Phocyas* apoſtatize from his religion; after which the abhorrence of *Eudocia* would have been reaſonable, his miſery would have been juſt, and the horrors of his repentance exemplary. The players, however, required that the guilt of *Phocyas* ſhould terminate in deſertion to the enemy; and Hughes, unwilling that his relations ſhould loſe the benefit of his work, complied with the alteration.

He was now weak with a lingering conſumption, and not able to attend the rehearſal; yet was ſo vigorous in his faculties, that only ten days before his death he wrote the dedication to his patron lord Cowper.

On February 17, 1719-20, the play was repreſented, and the author died. He lived to hear that it was well received; but paid no regard to the intelligence, being then wholly employed in the meditations of a departing Chriſtian.

A man of his character was undoubtedly regretted; and Steele devoted an eſſay, in the paper called *The Theatre*, to the memory of his virtues. His life is written in the Biographia with ſome degree of favourable partiality; and an account of him is prefixed to his works, by his relation the late Mr. Duncombe, a man whoſe blameleſs elegance deſerved the ſame reſpect.

The character of his genius I ſhall tranſcribe from the correſpondence of *Swift* and *Pope*.

"A month ago," ſays Swift, "was ſent "me over, by a friend of mine, the works "of *John Hughes*, Eſquire. They are in "proſe and verſe. I never heard of the man "in my life, yet I find your name as a ſub-"ſcriber.

" ſcriber. He is too great a poet for me; " and I think among the *mediocriſts*, in proſe " as well as verſe."

To this Pope returns: " To anſwer your " queſtion as to Mr. *Hughes*; what he want- " ed in genius, he made up as an honeſt " man; but he was of the claſs you think " him."

SHEFFIELD,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, deſcended from a long ſeries of illuſtrious anceſtors, was born in 1649, the ſon of Edmund earl of Mulgrave, who died 1658. The young lord was put into the hands of a tutor, with whom he was ſo little ſatisfied, that he got rid of him in a ſhort time, and, at an age not exceeding twelve years, reſolved to educate himſelf. Such a purpoſe, formed at ſuch an age, and ſucceſsfully proſecuted, delights as it is ſtrange, and inſtructs as it is real.

His literary acquiſitions are more wonderful, as the years in which they are commonly made were ſpent in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court. When

war

war was declared againſt the Dutch, he went at ſeventeen on board the ſhip in which prince Rupert and the duke of Albemarle ſailed, with the command of the fleet; but by contrariety of winds they were reſtrained from action. His zeal for the king's ſervice was recompenſed by the command of one of the independent troops of horſe, then raiſed to protect the coaſt.

Next year he received a ſummons to parliament, which as he was then but eighteen years old, the earl of Northumberland cenſured as at leaſt indecent, and his objection was allowed. He had a quarrel with the earl of Rocheſter, which he has perhaps too oſtentatiouſly related, as Rocheſter's ſurviving ſiſter, the lady Sandwich, is ſaid to have told him with very ſharp reproaches.

When another Dutch war (1672) broke out, he went again a volunteer in the ſhip which the celebrated lord Oſſory commanded; and there made, as he relates, two curious remarks.

"I have obſerved two things, which I dare "affirm, though not generally believed.

"One

" One was, that the wind of a cannon-bullet, " though flying never ſo near, is incapable " of doing the leaſt harm; and, indeed, were " it otherwiſe, no man above deck would " eſcape. The other was, that a great ſhot " may be ſometimes avoided, even as it flies, " by changing one's ground a little; for, " when the wind ſometimes blew away the " ſmoak, it was ſo clear a ſun-ſhiny day " that we could eaſily perceive the bullets " (that were half-ſpent) fall into the water, " and from thence bound up again among " us, which gives ſufficient time for making " a ſtep or two on any ſide; though, in ſo " ſwift a motion, 'tis hard to judge well in " what line the bullet comes, which, if miſ- " taken, may by removing coſt a man his " life, inſtead of ſaving it."

His behaviour was ſo favourably repreſented by lord Oſſory, that he was advanced to the command of the Katherine, the beſt ſecond-rate ſhip in the navy.

He afterwards raiſed a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land-forces were ſent a ſhore by prince Rupert; and he lived in the camp very familiarly with

with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own; and had the promiſe of a garter, which he obtained in his twenty-fifth year. He was likewiſe made gentleman of the bed-chamber.

He afterwards went into the French ſervice, to learn the art of war under Turenne, but ſtaid only a ſhort time. Being by the duke of Monmouth oppoſed in his pretenſions to the firſt troop of horſe-guards, he, in return, made Monmouth ſuſpected by the duke of York. He was however, not long after, when the unlucky Monmouth fell into diſgrace, recompenſed with the lieutenancy of Yorkſhire and the government of Hull.

Thus rapidly did he make his way both to military and civil honours and employments; yet, buſy as he was, he did not neglect his ſtudies, but at leaſt cultivated poetry; in which he muſt have been early conſidered as uncommonly ſkilful, if it be true which is reported, that, when he was yet not twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel.

The

The Moors having beſiged Tangier, he was ſent (1680) with two thouſand men to its relief. A ſtrange ſtory is told of danger to which he was intentionally expoſed in a leaky ſhip, to gratify ſome reſentful jealouſy of the king, whoſe health he therefore would never permit at his table, till he ſaw himſelf in a ſafer place. His voyage was proſperouſly performed in three weeks, and the Moors without a conteſt retired before him.

In this voyage he compoſed the *Viſion*; a licentious poem, ſuch as was faſhionable in thoſe times, with little power of invention or propriety of ſentiment.

At his return he found the King kind, who perhaps had never been angry; and he continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the ſucceſſion of king James, to whom he was intimately known, and by whom he thought himſelf beloved, he naturally expected ſtill brighter ſun-ſhine; but all know how ſoon that reign began to gather clouds. His expectations were not diſappointed; he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made lord chamberlain. He accepted

accepted a place in the high commiſſion, without knowledge, as he declared after the Revolution, of its illegality. Having few religious ſcruples, he attended the king to maſs, and kneeled with the reſt; but had no diſpoſition to receive the Romiſh Faith, or to force it upon others; for when the prieſts, encouraged by his appearances of compliance, attempted to convert him, he told them, as Burnet has recorded, that he was willing to receive inſtruction, and that he had taken much pains to believe in God who made the world and all men in it; but that he ſhould not be eaſily perſuaded *that man was quits, and made God again.*

A pointed ſentence is beſtowed by ſucceſſive tranſmiſſion on the laſt whom it will fit: this cenſure of tranſubſtantiation, whatever be its value, was uttered long ago by Anne Aſkew, one of the firſt ſufferers for the Proteſtant Religion, who in the time of Henry VIII. was tortured in the Tower; concerning which there is reaſon to wonder that it was not known to the Hiſtorian of the Reformation.

In the Revolution he acquieſced, though he did not promote it. There was once a deſign of aſſociating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange; but the earl of Shrewſbury diſcouraged the attempt, by declaring that Mulgrave would never concur. This king William afterwards told him, and aſked what he would have done if the propoſal had been made. *Sir*, ſaid he, *I would have diſcovered it to the king whom I then ſerved.* To which King William replied, *I cannot blame you.*

Finding king James irremediably excluded, he voted for the conjunctive ſovereignty, upon this principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and his conſort equal, and it would pleaſe the prince their protector to have a ſhare in the ſovereignty. This vote gratified king William; yet, either by the king's diſtruſt or his own diſcontent, he lived ſome years without employment. He looked on the king with malevolence, and, if his verſes or his proſe may be credited, with contempt. He was, notwithſtanding this averſion or indifference, made marquis of Normanby (1694); but ſtill oppoſed the

court on ſome important queſtions; yet at laſt he was received into the cabinet council, with a penſion of three thouſand pounds.

At the acceſſion of queen Anne, whom he is ſaid to have courted when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation (1702) ſhe made him lord privy ſeal, and ſoon after lord lieutenant of the North-riding of Yorkſhire. He was then named commiſſioner for treating with the Scots about the Union; and was made next year firſt duke of Normanby, and then of Buckinghamſhire, there being ſuſpected to be ſomewhere a latent claim to the title of Buckingham.

Soon after becoming jealous of the duke of Marlborough, he reſigned the privy ſeal, and joined the diſcontented Tories in a motion extremely offenſive to the Queen, for inviting the princeſs Sophia to England. The Queen courted him back with an offer no leſs than that of the chancellorſhip, which he refuſed. He now retired from buſineſs, and built that houſe in the Park, which is now

the Queen's, upon ground granted by the Crown.

When the miniſtry was changed (1710), he was made lord chamberlain of the houſehold, and concurred in all tranſactions of that time, except that he endeavoured to protect the Catalans. After the Queen's death, he became a conſtant opponent of the Court; and, having no publick buſineſs, is ſuppoſed to have amuſed himſelf by writing his two tragedies. He died February 24, 1720-21.

He was thrice married; by his two firſt wives he had no children: by his third, who was the daughter of king James by the counteſs of Dorcheſter, and the widow of the earl of Angleſey, he had, beſides other children that died early, a ſon born in 1716, who died in 1735, and put an end to the line of Sheffield. It is obſervable that the Duke's three wives were all widows. The Dutcheſs died in 1742.

His character is not to be propoſed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be ſuppoſed to have learned from Hobbes, and his

morality was ſuch as naturally proceeds from looſe opinions. His ſentiments with reſpect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were ſuch as a gaming-table ſupplies. He was cenſured as covetous, and has been defended by an inſtance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleneſs. He is ſaid, however, to have had much tenderneſs, and to have been very ready to apologiſe for his violences of paſſion.

He is introduced into the late collection only as a poet; and, if we credit the teſtimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank. But favour and flattery are now at an end; criticiſm is no longer ſoftened by his bounties or awed by his ſplendor, and, being able to take a more ſteady view, diſcovers him to be a writer that ſometimes glimmers, but rarely ſhines, feebly laborious, and at beſt but pretty. His ſongs are upon common topicks; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and deſpairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little ſtanzas: to be great he hardly tries; to be gay is hardly in his power.

In

In the Eſſay on Satire he was always ſuppoſed to have had the help of Dryden. His Eſſay on Poetry is the great work, for which he was praiſed by Roſcommon, Dryden, and Pope, and doubtleſs by many more whoſe eulogies have periſhed.

Upon this piece he appears to have ſet a high value; for he was all his life improving it by ſucceſſive reviſals, ſo that there is ſcarcely any poem to be found of which the laſt edition differs more from the firſt. Amongſt other changes, mention is made of ſome compoſitions of Dryden, which were written after the Eſſay.

At the time when this work firſt appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully eſtabliſhed, and therefore Taſſo and Spenſer were ſet before him. The two laſt lines were theſe. The Epick Poet, ſays he,

> Muſt above Milton's lofty flights prevail,
> Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater
> Spenſer fail.

The laſt line in ſucceeding editions was ſhortened, and the order of names continued; but

but now Milton is at laſt advanced to the higheſt place, and the paſſage thus adjuſted,

Muſt above Taſſo's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenſer, and ev'n Milton fail.

Amendments are ſeldom made without ſome token of a rent: *lofty* does not ſuit Taſſo ſo well as Milton.

One celebrated line ſeems to be borrowed. The Eſſay calls a perfect character

A faultleſs monſter which the world ne'er ſaw.

Scaliger in his poems terms Virgil *ſine labe monſtrum*. Sheffield can ſcarely be ſuppoſed to have read Scaliger's poetry; perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

Of this Eſſay, which Dryden has exalted ſo highly, it may be juſtly ſaid that the precepts are judicious, ſometimes new, and often happily expreſſed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and ſome ſtrange appearances of negligence; as, when he gives the laws of elegy, he inſiſts upon connection and coherence; without which, ſays he.

'Tis

'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will;
But not an elegy, nor writ with ſkill,
No Panegyrick, nor a Cooper's Hill.

Who would not ſuppoſe that Waller's Panegyrick and Denham's Cooper's Hill were Elegies?

His verſes are often inſipid; but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perſpicuity and elegance of an hiſtorian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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